

THE THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY AND THE
SOCIALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT

THE THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY AND THE SOCIALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY

This thesis is concerned with Shaftesbury (1671-1713), and with the function and content of his major published work, Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times (1711). It illustrates a significant theme in Shaftesbury's work. The overall perspective that is presented takes the form of a demonstration of the nature of the intellectual enterprise upon which Shaftesbury was engaged in writing the Characteristicks. As essential background to this the social and intellectual context in which Shaftesbury developed his views is described. The Characteristicks is then to be seen as Shaftesbury's creative response to the social and intellectual forces which acted upon him; his public response and affirmation, as distinct from his private persuasion.

After an introductory biographical outline, attention is given to Shaftesbury's early philosophical development and political awareness. Shaftesbury is seen as having been uneasy with contemporary philosophical activity, particularly moral philosophy, and also with the practice and principles found in the contemporary political world. Against this background, Shaftesbury's studies in Roman Stoicism are seen to have provided an intellectually satisfying philosophy.

Thereafter the thesis is concerned to demonstrate how Shaftesbury attempted to re-locate intelligent discussion of

philosophical questions among his contemporaries. He did this by criticising views and practices then prevalent; and by offering both a philosophical practice and a philosophical 'system'. The whole of this activity has been called the socialisation of philosophy. This approach asserts the importance of social implication, in addition to technical refinement, in Shaftesbury's philosophy.

THE THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY AND THE SOCIALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY.

DECLARATION.

THIS THESIS HAS BEEN COMPOSED BY MYSELF AND THE WORK
IS MY OWN.

(signed)



(date) 20th April 1978
—————→



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THE THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY AND THE
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The Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, where the Shaftesbury papers are held, the British Library, the Bodleian Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the university libraries of Edinburgh, Manchester and London, all permitted me to use their facilities, for which I am most grateful. The endeavours of the Arts faculty administration at Edinburgh have not been unappreciated.

In particular, I should like to thank Dr. Nicholas T. Phillipson, my Director of Studies for his guidance and advice.

Abbreviations.

PRO Public Record Office Shaftesbury Papers. Class Number 30/24

BL British Library

Add MSS British Museum Additional Manuscripts

MS Manuscript.

fol(s) Folio(s)

Transcripts.

The practice here has been to transcribe from MS material with contemporary capitalisation, and italicization, but with contractions expanded. The printed or published letter has been cited as it appears in published form.

A Note on Dates.

Until 1752 England was behind the rest of Western Europe in the matter of calendar. Throughout the text of this study Old Style dates have been used, although the year has been taken to have begun on 1 January. Shaftesbury occasionally used New Style dates when writing from the Continent, but it has not been found necessary to cite this material in the study.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS

The first edition of the Characteristicks appeared in 1711. A copy of of this text which has been altered by the third Earl preparatory to the production of a second edition is now in the British Library (c 28 g 16) as is the second edition that was seen through the press by Shaftesbury's associate Thomas Micklethwaite. The 1714 edition, as this became, is really 'the' edition. However, the British Library copy contains the Letter Concerning Design which is omitted in later editions, and perhaps in some of the 1714 edition also. It appears to have then been withdrawn, reappearing in 1732. The third edition appeared in 1723, nearly ten years after the second, which makes possible a surmise that Shaftesbury's work was a 'slow starter'. Of the many editions of the Characteristicks the choice for a working text lay between the complete 1714 edition, and the more readily available edition of 1900 by John Robertson, (with an introduction by Stanley Grean added in 1964). This last does not contain the two later treatises the Judgment of Hercules and the Letter Concerning Design, but has, after some deliberation, been preferred on the grounds of availability. If a new edition were to be considered, it should be based upon the full 1714 edition, with bibliographical comparison with other editions. This is certainly to be hoped for, but then a new and full edition of the Shaftesbury notebooks, and letters is also desirable. There would have to be collaboration between the British Library, the Public Records Office and the Bodleian Library, in addition to bibliographical, literary, classical, and historical expertise. At the present time, and in the prevailing climate of economic stringency, undertakings of this kind are often beyond the resources of academic institution and publisher.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the nature of the enterprise that the third Earl of Shaftesbury may be seen to have been engaged upon in writing his major work the Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times. (1711). It stems from a feeling of dissatisfaction with the apparent disjunction of the six constituent 'treatises' which together make up the Characteristicks. From this feeling, there arose a determination to look to the background and history of the author, in order that some appreciation of why Shaftesbury wrote after this fashion might be obtained. The first part of the thesis attends predominantly to this question of background, and the second to the presentation of the treatises of the Characteristicks as the expression of a coherent strategy, which serves to unify the treatises in terms of purpose and intention in the author.

In the first part, Shaftesbury is seen as reacting against, or being indifferent to, prevailing modes of explanation in philosophy and manners. He sees as deficient or wrong-headed the types of explanation that were attempting to account for human behaviour, the nature of man, of society, and their relationship. He shows an early concern with the practice as opposed to the theory of morals, and the problems of translating theory into practice. Shaftesbury can be seen to be rejecting or trivialising current preoccupations, and to be searching for his own philosophical framework upon which he could structure his own moral commitment. During this time, Shaftesbury sometimes left philosophy and his philosophical and intellectual interest to one side, and became involved with politics, only to find that behaviour in that area, and political thinking, philosophical or ideological, contrasted with polit-

ical practice, so that this area merely provided a microcosm of a wider world and not an alternative to it. His personal solution he found by basing his commitment upon the philosophy and practice of stoicism. He then had to translate this into a form digestible by a wider audience.

The second part of the thesis is concerned to show this process upon the basis of the treatises in the Characteristicks. To the combination of intention and expression, the phrase 'socialisation of philosophy' has been given. In sociological terms, the idea of 'socialisation', predominantly concerned with people, has been described in the following way:

'socialisation is learning that enables the learner to perform social roles'¹

In this thesis, it is argued that Shaftesbury's overall intention in writing was to socialise philosophy, in its broadest sense of reasoned critical thinking, that he sought to break down or disregard the established format and institutional arrangements for the discussion of matters of philosophy, for the practice of philosophical activity, and to establish by contrast, a means of philosophising, and a model of philosophy. The narrowly conceived 'Shaftesburean' philosophy is seen as being part of a wider enterprise, the attempt to establish some alternative kinds of behavioural norms for the social expression of critical thinking and opinionating. The wider sense of philosophy in Shaftesbury's Characteristicks, may therefore be said to have reference not to a system or theory, but to an activity, a critical attitude of mind and its application. The phrase socialisation of philosophy then has not a

¹ H. Johnson, Sociology: a Systematic Introduction, p 65 as quoted in Eric Carlton, Ideology and Social Order (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1977) p 78

direct relation to its sociological origins, but has been retained as being peculiarly able to connote the societal aspects of Shaftesbury's writing, and the introduction and accomodation process by which one thing is established in an unfamiliar environment, with appropriate reciprocal adjustments as that process takes place. The concern then, is with the intended function of Shaftesbury's writing as well as with its content, with the activity of philosophy as well as ~~as with its content~~, with the activity of philosophy as well as the establishment of the Shaftesbury theory.

CHAPTER ONE

SHAFTESBURY: HIS LIFE AND WORKS: AN OUTLINE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the life and works of the third Earl of Shaftesbury. In relation to the overall design, by which it is hoped to demonstrate that the intention and strategy of the author of the Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,¹ was to remove philosophy from the study or 'cell', to establish it upon a broader basis, and to present it in a form which was adapted to the needs of his audience, the function of this chapter is to act as a preliminary sketch of the social and personal setting, out of which the several contributions of the third Earl of Shaftesbury can be seen as emerging.

Although the principle facts of Shaftesbury's life have been corroborated, the account which follows seeks to align these facts with the chronology of the Shaftesbury canon. The latter is shewn to have included some less familiar unpublished material. In understanding the wider purpose of the Characteristics, and the author's view of what sort of an undertaking that work was, it has been found helpful to trace out particular aspects of the intellectual development of the author. This chapter is to be seen as preliminary background to these specific aspects of Shaftesbury's development.

1. The original title: Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, is hereafter presented in its shortened and modernised form of Characteristics. The edition used is the reprinted, Characteristics ed J M Robertson (1900) with an Introduction by Stanley Grean, 2 vols in one. (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Co. Inc, 1964)

The third Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, was born in 1671, at Essex House on the north side of the Strand in London. This was the London residence of his grandfather, who was already a leading figure among the politicians at the court of Charles II.

Shaftesbury, (as we shall hereafter refer to the author of the Characteristics, individualising others of the name accordingly) was not quite born into the peerage. His grandfather at this time had not been created Earl of Shaftesbury, Baron Ashley and Lord Cooper of Pawlett. The grandson therefore shared his 'double barrelled' surname of Ashley Cooper, and the forename Anthony, with his father and grandfather, who took the name as eldest sons.

Kinship was important, and it is helpful therefore to look briefly at these persons and those others who appear, in the context of the Shaftesbury 'family', to have exercised some considerable degree of influence on Shaftesbury.

The father had suffered from ill health as a youth, and had been married to Dorothy Manners, daughter of John Manners, Earl of Rutland. His incapacities were perhaps those of character, for he also presented the future third Earl, with two brothers and four sisters, with whom to share his childhood. The mother, Dorothy Manners, does not feature prominently here, although it might be more correct to say that neither parent managed a great interest in the child for this was quickly assumed by the grandfather.

Until recently, the first Earl of Shaftesbury had been seen as a politician motivated by ambition and self-interest. This picture has now been modified by the work of his latest biographer who has

tried to present a more mature and balanced interpretation.² In this he has achieved considerable success; against a political setting characterised at times by the appearance of a total lack of state policy or strategy, the first Earl now appears as one of the few leading statesmen with a longterm policy worthy of the name. For our purposes, it is necessary that we know that he rose to high office under Charles II becoming Lord Chancellor, and that he did not hold office for long. In 1672 he was created the Earl of Shaftesbury; the honour of Lord Ashley falling to his son. After leaving office, the first Earl became one of the leaders of the Country Party, an opposition grouping to the Court, which he helped form into something resembling a party. The logic of this development was carried further in the emergence of the Whig Party, in which the first Earl was also a leading figure, perhaps, the leading figure, up to the climax of the Exclusion crisis and the Oxford Parliament of 1681. Thereafter, unassured by the failure of an attempt to bring him to trial for treason, Charles's greatest opponent diagnosed the signs of reaction and, escaped abroad to Holland. There he died in 1683.

The legacy of the public career of the first Earl, aside from his titles and estates which were not inconsiderable, would not have enhanced the prospects of a pleasant life for the future third Earl. The poet Dryden, by inclination moving with the tide of reaction, worked to blacken not only the character of the King's opponent but also that of the family. The first Earl was called 'false Achitophel'

2. K H D Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). *passim*.

and his son, whose sin was one of uselessness rather than of any other sort, was described as being 'born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy.'³ After his death, Shaftesbury became a useful scapegoat upon whom to fix the excesses of the Popish Plot. The shadow was allowed to fall unimpeded by any attempt at defence, not even from those who later assumed the leadership of the Whig Party.

There was, however, a private side to this and it is in the Shaftesbury household, the family of the first Earl, that the development and education of the young child was arranged. In that household, as secretary, companion, and fellow of the first Earl, lived John Locke. In his formative years, Shaftesbury's education was arranged by Locke. Broadly, the first Earl made the plans, Locke arranged for them to be carried out, and a third party did the actual teaching. In addition, there may be added those extra-mural considerations such as those occasions, when staying in his grandfather's household, the young Ashley Cooper may have been allowed some small social role in the presence of guests, or witnessed some influential or significant exchanges with his grandfather.

Of these last we can know little. Such conversations as there were would have had to take place before Shaftesbury was twelve years of age. We know that the first Earl determined to keep the young man in his own household. In March 1673/4 the father of Shaftesbury had signed a deed assigning to the first Earl rights of Guardianship

3. John Dryden, Absalom and Achitophel. Dryden returned to the attack in The Medall. A Satyre against Sedition which was published the following year in 1682. The intellectual movements of Dryden are well traced against the background of the age in Louis I Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (University of Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1966).

over two of the children, Anthony and his brother John.⁴ When this actually happened is less clear. The first Earl appears to have been in some doubts, fearing perhaps that his son was hardly likely to provide the kind of attention that he wished his grandson to have, and knowing on the other hand that his own household was not really the most congenial atmosphere in which to raise a child. Something of this uncertainty emerges in the following, which the first Earl wrote to Locke:

'... I thank you for your care about my Grandchild, but having wearyed my self with considerations every way, I resolve to have him in my house. I long to speak with you about it.'⁵

The more formal aspects of Shaftesbury's education are more readily traced. He was first instructed by Mrs. Elizabeth Birch at Clapham, then a village rather than a suburb, but with sufficient proximity to London to allow regular visits to and from his grandfather's London house. In 1682 he was sent to a private school.

It was at this point that control of the child's education changed hands, apparently passing back to the father after the flight of the first Earl. In the following year he was sent to Winchester. He would then have been around twelve years old. Winchester he found abhorrent on two counts. The first was the prevalence of drinking, which appears to have exceeded the customary extent in those times when beer or ale was often provided as the staple beverage. More serious was the second occasion of his dislike of the School, namely that he appears to have been subjected to taunts from schoolfellows concerning the defeat and blackened memory of his grandfather.

4. PRO 30/24/20 Part 1/2.

5. Bodleian Library MS Locke C.7 fol. 72. First Earl of Shaftesbury to Locke 20 March 1680.

He asked that he be taken away and this request seems to have been complied with. His youngest brother Maurice, however, continued at the school. We can infer that Shaftesbury left Winchester, some time before he went upon the Grand Tour, for on the eve of the departure, the proposed guide and mentor, Daniel Denoune wrote to Shaftesbury's father in the following terms:

'...The noble and virtuous inclinations, which in seventeine or eighteine months acquaintance I have perceived in my Lord Ashley gives me ground to hope that your Lordship's Laudable designs of sending him abroad shall (by the blessing of God) be attended with very comfortable success....'6

Leaving his two brothers, Shaftesbury (since 1683 the Lord Ashley) started upon the Grand Tour. His companions were the tutor Denoune, and two friends of his own age, John Cropley and Thomas Selater Bacon. Significantly perhaps, their first port of call was to visit John Locke, who was at this time resident abroad in Holland.

It was not the first time that Locke had been abroad. After the dismissal of the first Earl from the Woolsack in 1673, Locke's own dismissal from the Secretaryship to the Council on Trade and Plantations, had soon followed. In 1675 Locke had set off on his own tour, passing fifteen months at Montpellier while his patron and friend the first Earl passed some twelve months less comfortably in the Tower, but he returned by 1679 to help in the recovered political fortunes of the first Earl. The point is, of course, that these absences must be taken into account when considering

6. PRO 30/24/19 Part 2/18. Daniel Denoune to the Second Earl of Shaftesbury, 7 July 1687.

the role of Locke in Shaftesbury's education.

Up to this time, 1687, that role seems to have been for the most part supervisory. Locke was not a general tutor to the young Lord Ashley. Cranston in his biography of Locke suggests that the retrospective view of Shaftesbury as to the degree of involvement of John Locke, had in it something of the boastful.⁷

Locke's role, at this time, can hardly be adjudged to have been a major one. Hereafter, the picture changed somewhat, as Locke emerged into prominence as a leading European intellectual, and also as one of the strongest of the remaining ties that linked the worlds of the first and third Earls of Shaftesbury.

Among the papers of Locke now in the Bodleian Library, there is a note of a list of books left by Shaftesbury and Denoune with Locke in Rotterdam in 1687. Of some twenty or so ascribed to Lord Ashley, the following appear: L'Arts de L'Homme d'Epee en trois parties...1686; Nouvelle maniere de fortifier les places...1686; Life and death of my Lord Russell...1684; Le vrai interet des Princes; Entrêtions sur le pluralité des Mondes; Le Sublime dans les Mœurs... 1686; L'Inconnu par Corneille...1687; Les Devoirs de la vie civile ...1687; Le Director General des fortifications par Vauban...1685; Alys, an Amsterdam opera, 1687; Nouvelles de la République /des lettres/, June, Sept, 1687; Histoire abrégée de l'Europe...July 1687; Mercure Historique et politique, July August Sept 1687. These are among a selection of predominantly French titles, which touch upon the areas of Letters, Arts, History and Politics, as well as more

7. Maurice Cranston, John Locke, (London: Longmans, 1966) pp 192-3

bellicose activities. They suggest that at this time Shaftesbury was pursuing the broad education of the nobleman's son, not dissimilar to that outlined by Herbert of Cherbury, and certainly not specifically Lockeian.⁸

Locke later wrote some letters for his friend Edward Clarke on the subject of education and it was with these principles that Shaftesbury claimed that his education had been designed to fit. In particulars, there are clearly discrepancies. Locke did not claim to be writing for young noblemen but for the son of a gentleman, and the social standing of Lord Ashley was much greater than that of Edward Clarke's son. Similarly, Greek was thought to be a worthy accomplishment for a scholar, but Locke pointed out that the gentleman's son was not likely to be a scholar. Shaftesbury had some fair knowledge of Greek and Latin at the age of eleven.

However, it would be a mistake to deny any connection on the grounds of the specifics not agreeing. Locke's book on education is to a large extent devoted to the importance of character formation, of inculcating propriety as much as facts. The tutor, for example, has to be morally qualified as well as academically qualified. Locke here allows 'native propensions' such as fierceness, timorousness, confidence and obstinacy, which, he thought, would always remain. In this not inconsiderable part of his work, Locke

8. Bodleian Library MS Locke c.7 fol.80. 'My Lord Ashley's books left with Mr. Locke at Rotterdam, 5 Nov 1687' Edward Herbert, Baron Herbert of Cherbury, The Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, (London: Oxford University Press, 1976). Although not available at this time, being extant in manuscript only, this work gives a fair impression of the attention thought necessary to mind, body, and character in mid-seventeenth century education among the nobility.

may well have reviewed his own experience with Shaftesbury. Significantly also, Locke places learning after other attributes, such as virtue, wisdom and breeding.⁹ It is in this area that the influence of Locke appears to have been greatest. There is, however, a more direct influence upon Shaftesbury's thought, through Locke, although its nature is such that it has been thought best to consider it in the context of Shaftesbury's early philosophical environment.¹⁰

Shaftesbury's party left Locke in November 1687, and in the following month settled in Paris. He corresponded with Locke from there, and it may have been that some of Locke's views on the value of travelling abroad after this fashion, were formed from the judgment he made of Shaftesbury's progress. In a gentleman's son, Locke wrote, travelling had great advantages, but was usually undertaken at the wrong age. The purpose, he supposed, was to perfect skills in language or to obtain a wider knowledge of the world. The usual age chosen, however, was calculated to defy either of these aims, since a young man was often too old to acquire or improve his language, and too young to benefit from the evidence of morals and life in other countries which lay before him.¹¹ Shaftesbury had written of delaying his studies until after some holidays were over, of going to the opera, of going to the

9. John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, (London: A and J Churchill, 1693. Facsimile reproduction by Scolar Press, 1970.) passim.

10. Infra, Chapter Two.

11. John Locke, op.cit., pp 253-260.

Court with the English envoy.^{12.}

At some period thereafter, the small party left Paris, and travelled to Italy. A planned return through the Loire valley and southern France had to be cancelled because of the outbreak of hostilities between France and England. Shaftesbury, obliged to travel through the Habsburg Empire for a space of two months at the beginning of 1689, was entertained at Courts en route, but at the other extreme was sometimes glad of clean straw with which to make his bed. His letters to Locke and to his father, show little of his studies, but reveal an early prejudice against Roman Catholicism, Jesuits, and paradoxically an anti-Court attitude. This latter is significant in that part of the Country party ideology had been opposition to Courts in terms of their corrupting influence. It is paradoxical in that Shaftesbury related his acceptability at foreign courts, those of the Emperor, the Elector of Saxony and the Elector of Brandenburg are identified, in addition to Versailles, with evident relish.¹³

Whilst Shaftesbury was away from England considerable changes were made in the government of the country. James II, having succeeded his brother Charles, had introduced policies which were overtly pro-Catholic. Moreover, the rebellion of Monmouth in 1685, although not gaining the support of the nobility, had come

12. Bodleian Library, MS Locke, C.7, fols 81-4; Shaftesbury to Locke, letters of 1st and 22nd December 1687. Shaftesbury main concern may have been to assure Locke of his interest in the latter's well-being, as Shaftesbury requests that Locke look after his health.
13. Benjamin Rand, The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1900). Hereafter cited as 'Rand'. pp 273-80

geographically close to the Shaftesbury household. Reaction had seemed well entrenched when Shaftesbury had left England in 1687, but before he could return, James had left England, William and Mary had succeeded to the throne, and a declaration of war with France had followed this "Glorious Revolution". Meanwhile, Shaftesbury had been stuck in the Empire, unable to share in these momentous events. It is not unreasonable therefore, to infer that the young man may have felt somewhat left out. He included in his account to his father, references to the 'late purge' i.e. the Revolution, which he viewed as having saved England from the imposition of Catholicism, 'that horriddest of all religions', and from servitude to France. He added that he was attempting to return from Hamburg with all speed, in order that he might be home if there was to be fighting in England, although this seemed unlikely.¹⁴

Despite these sentiments, Shaftesbury had clearly avoided, or been kept from, any of the preparations that were made or plans that were discussed in Holland in 1687. He was, of course, young for a potential revolutionary, but through Locke, he may have made the acquaintance of Lord Mordaunt, who was more closely involved.

By the middle of 1689, Shaftesbury was once more in England. He was not to act a public part at this time. Instead, he seems to have come up abruptly against the requirements of his social position. Firstly, it was desirable that he should marry, but although his father had written to Lady Russell, widow of the executed Whig, Lord Russell, she had declined to consider the marriage of one of her

14. Rand, pp 275-80. Shaftesbury to the second Earl, May 1689.

daughters, pleading that the girl was too young. Secondly, Shaftesbury's father had also allowed his affairs to degenerate at this time, and was confronted with the prospect of finding money for allowances for his sons, and portions for the four daughters. It would appear that Shaftesbury was involved in settling these matters, which included the arrangement of a private Act of Parliament. Further, Shaftesbury had to pay visits and to wait upon his neighbours, to enlarge his social acquaintance; this being necessary for the successful cultivation of mutual benefit, local administration, and such features as would form the staple requirements of landed gentry. Shaftesbury's father about this time became confined to his room with ill health; a court case deriving from the activities of his grandfather had to be determined; Shaftesbury's parents separated for some time, Shaftesbury having occasion to correspond with the Earl of Rutland; his brother Maurice's education had to be restored after the ravages that were supposed to have been inflicted by Winchester; the second brother John died; all this added to the burdens that had been thrust upon Shaftesbury at his return. In 1690 he declined to stand for Parliament, possibly because he wanted to study, but such evidence as there is points rather to the need to attempt to put some kind of order into the family affairs.¹⁵ It is necessary to keep in mind this side of Shaftesbury's life, that centred upon St. Giles' house, the family seat in Dorsetshire, as it forms a significant counterpoise to the life of retirement that he led for much of his existence.

15. PRO 30/24/22/2 on Maurice; also, 30/24/22/1: 30/24/21/229.

At this time, Locke had returned to England, and it was to his 'foster-father' that Shaftesbury revealed some of his frustrations.¹⁶ He also began, rather uneasily, to hold a correspondence of a philosophical kind with Locke, of which only a small portion appears to have survived but which would suggest that Shaftesbury started upon this kind of speculation as a result of conversations with Locke, and had reached some kind of conclusion before he entered public life, in 1694.¹⁷ The content of this will be considered in the next chapter.

The years from 1690 to 1695 were important as years in which Shaftesbury may be seen to have reached maturity. Hitherto, it has been accepted, on the basis of the account provided by the fourth Earl of Shaftesbury to Birch, which provided the basis of the latter's article in his General Dictionary (1734-41; Vol.9) that Shaftesbury's main reason for not entering upon public life was that he might devote his time more fully to his studies. In fact this appears as a by-product of a retirement or rural existence that was principally occasioned by the family concerns and social obligations mentioned above. Often Shaftesbury stayed with Thomas Stringer and his wife, acquaintances of the first Earl and also of Locke. From thence, he would visit St Giles for short periods fulfil social obligations and retreat back to the Stringers' household. Gradually the burden of this

16. The phrase 'foster-father' was Shaftesbury's; vide, Notes and Queries, Vol.III, 8 February 1851, Letter of Shaftesbury to Jean le Clerc, concerning Locke and the first Earl. Also Bodleian Library, MS Locke, C.7 fols 87, 88, 89-92, which last contain references to Locke's annuity from the first Earl about which some changes had been proposed which made Locke fear he was less secure of his money.

17. Bodleian Library, MS Locke C.7 fols. 85, 87, 94, 112.

begins to tell, and his letters to Locke become uneasy; once-jocular references to his life in the country, take a different turn and appear somewhat embittered. He writes then that he would like to resume his philosophical disputations with Locke but knows that he is unsuited to it. At this time he had passed two years engaged in the country after this manner.¹⁸

Usually, Shaftesbury was unable to stay far away from his rural neighbourhood, but at the latter end of 1691 he managed to visit Locke at Oates, the Essex residence of Sir Francis Masham and his wife Lady Damaris. This he later referred to as a visit to an enchanted castle. Locke and Lady Masham appear to have seriously attempted to interest Shaftesbury in activities which he found more to his taste. In particular, by encouraging his philosophical interests they gave him an outlet of which he seems to have been in some need. Locke was to write in his book on education of the desirability of a gentleman's son learning a trade or two, and for Shaftesbury, this interest in philosophy may have been stimulated on the basis of a belief that here, at least, was one area in which he could be his own man.

The declining health of his father necessitated that Shaftesbury take on an increasing amount of the weight of family affairs, and after 1691, he was not always able to visit Oates as he would have liked nor to be in London at the same time as Locke, who himself now found travelling difficult. Locke persisted in maintaining contact and in showing an interest in anything which Shaftes-

18. Bodleian Library MS Locke C.7 Fol 94, Shaftesbury to Locke, 30 August 1691

-bury might consider a discovery in his philosophical speculations. In September 1694, Shaftesbury replied to the effect that whilst glad to communicate anything of such a nature, he was not concerned with new facts, but with the communication and implementation of that which was already known. An extract may reveal some of the tension that had by this time entered Shaftesbury's correspondence:

'...It is not with me as with an Empirick, one that is studying of curiosities, raising of new inventions that are to gain credit to the author.... It is not in my case as with one of the men of new systems who are to build the credit of their own upon the ruin of the ancients...For my part I am so far from thinking that mankind need any new discoveries...that I know not what we could ask of God to know more than we do, ... the thing that I would ask of God should be to make men live up to what they know....' 19

Shaftesbury had, in fact, turned moralist as well as philosopher. It was a distinction that he himself was reaching towards when he wrote of the Sophists as those who sought knowledge qua information, and the Philosophers who sought knowledge in order that they might learn how best to live their lives. The Sage was the model of the true philosopher.²⁰

The fourth Earl later wrote that his father had by this time written an early draft of his Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit, however there is no supporting evidence of this, its date of composition being uncertain, but prior to 1699. In association with Lady Masham, Locke may have arranged for shorthand notes of the sermons of Benjamin Whichcote to be given to Shaftesbury around

19. Bodleian Library MS Locke, C.7 Fol.112, Shaftesbury to Locke, 29 September 1694.

20. Ibid.

this time, Lady Damaris Masham being the daughter of Whichcote's colleague, Ralph Cudworth. However, such developments may have been thrust to one side for Shaftesbury entered politics at a bye-election in a local borough in 1695.

The excursion into political life will receive detailed attention below, although it may be said that Shaftesbury believed himself to be under some obligation to enter politics to do justice to the memory of his grandfather perhaps; that he also felt that a political career was proper for a 'patrician', however much he might personally find the idea unattractive. Against this last, there is evidence of sustained interest in politics, and a zeal that was moderated upon two accounts only, the first being his health and the second being a natural enough awareness of the dangers of too open a correspondence with friends in other countries. It is apparent that on several occasions Shaftesbury corresponded with one eye fixed on the mail-bag and the possibility of its being opened, and in the knowledge that some of his views would be used to support political arguments.²¹

Shaftesbury was Member of Parliament for the borough of Poole from 1695-8 being re-elected at the General Election of 1695 and

21. Rand, *passim*; Thomas Forster, F.L.S., Original Letter of Locke, Algernon Sidney; and Anthony, Lord Shaftesbury London, 1830. *passim*; The matter of this awareness was, of course, one of common sense. It should, however, be kept in mind that Shaftesbury modified his words with such considerations in mind, as well as that of the purpose which a particular letter was designed to fulfil. A careful reading of Rand, especially the correspondence with John Molesworth, and Furly, reveals that such considerations were there, and are therefore to be remarked.

serving for the whole of that Parliament. He declined to sit in the next Parliament, but retired abroad, residing anonymously in Holland for about a year from mid-1698.

In 1699 Shaftesbury returned to the family seat after his father's illness had clearly become fatal. In November of that year he became the third Earl of Shaftesbury.

During the year he had been in Holland, Shaftesbury had begun the literary career that was to lead to the Characteristics and a place in the history of English literature, moral philosophy, and aesthetics. In 1698, John and Awnsham Churchill, booksellers, the latter being a friend of Locke's, brought out a volume of sermons called, Select Sermons of Dr. Whichcote. This was edited with an introduction by Shaftesbury.²²

In 1699, while Shaftesbury was abroad, there appeared An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, in two discourses, viz. i. Of Virtue ii. Of the Obligations to Virtue. This had been brought to press by John Toland, whom Shaftesbury had otherwise encouraged. The fourth Earl claimed that this was without Shaftesbury's consent, and this appears to be true, although whether the true author was absolutely affronted may be doubted, since he encouraged a translation into French soon afterwards. This surreptitious printing of the Inquiry occasioned the first critical response to Shaftesbury and one in which it was hinted that the manuscript had, in fact, been abroad before this printing.²³

22. PRO 30/24/23/16 and 17: MS Volumes of Whichcote's Sermons, annotated by the third Earl of Shaftesbury.

23. Robert Day, Free Thoughts in Defence of a Future State ... London, 1700.

After his experiences in the Commons, Shaftesbury's retirement into Holland, had been occasioned by the breakdown in his health. Shaftesbury suffered initially from a form of respiratory infection - described as an "asthma" - that was exacerbated by smoke from coal fires. Actually, his health for some time was perhaps less of a handicap than it later became. Ostensibly the reason for his leaving politics, in 1700 Lord Somers summoned his assistance and the third Earl rode post from Somersetshire to London, a feat that would simply have killed a man in chronic ill-health. Thereafter, Shaftesbury was active in his attendance in the Lords, while the drama of the impeachment of the Whig Lords was being acted out, and retired from active political life in the Lords, only after the accession of Anne, when it became clear that other fellow members of the Whig Party were unwanted and unlikely to achieve much by their presence. Shaftesbury's health really came to a condition which put it past hopes of a total recovery in 1704.

Shaftesbury, newly created Earl, entered the Lords in January 1700 and attended the sessions with sufficient regularity for him to be regarded as active during the closing year of William III's reign. At elections he was zealous. The King's death, however, brought about great changes, and Shaftesbury, whose Inquiry had caused him to be suspected of disaffection to the established Church of England, was more likely than some of his fellow Whigs, to have been ostracised by the High Church Tories who initially returned to influence and office at the beginning of Anne's reign. Shaftesbury retired, though not without hopes that the times would change, but eventually he made over his proxy to the ex-Chancellor Lord Somers

and acknowledged that life had afforded him other opportunities.

Shaftesbury had, however, always been uneasy in politics, never quite accomodating himself to the change and compromise that featured at this time. High-minded himself, he was conscious that his principles did not always align with the requirements of the particular occasion, and against the background of ideological uncertainty that followed the Revolution, Shaftesbury may be seen as having been pushed one way and then another. Some months after his retirement, he ordered his affairs in the west country, and went once more into Holland in a private capacity. There he remained for a year, returning in mid-1704. During this time he composed, and had privately printed, The Sociable Enthusiast, an early version of one of the treatises, the Moralists, that appeared in the Characteristics. It represented the logical culmination of his philosophy in the speculative sense. When reference is made to Shaftesbury's philosophy, the works referred to are usually the Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit, and the Moralists. Since these made up a third of the Characteristics, it is valid to ask what is the role of the remainder, and it is that question for which an answer is to be sought in the following chapters.

Shaftesbury returned to England, prompted perhaps by the approach of a General Election, but his ship was caught by storms in the Channel and he himself fell ill of a fever, from which he took six months to make an incomplete recovery. In September, his close friend Sir John Cropley wrote to the British resident at Frankfort, Henry Davenant, that he, Cropley, had been:

'... in a continual expectation of Lord Shaftesbury I think for near three months together and doing one business or another for him, at last he is come and has had a very near escape he was near a month at sea fell ill of so violent a feaver was forced to venture in a small boat to land in a very great storm and land in a miserable place 80 miles of his brother and I with a physician went to him and brought him in a very weak condition to this place.....' 24

Shaftesbury appears to have recovered sufficiently to visit Locke during the summer of 1704.²⁵ However he suffered a relapse shortly afterwards and this meant that their meeting had been the last between the third Earl and his 'foster father', for Locke died in October 1704.

At intervals Shaftesbury engaged in some small-scale political activities, discouraging his friend Sir Rowland Gwynne from thinking of standing in the 1705 election, persuading his brother Maurice that he ought to do so, and confirming to Lord Somers that he was content for Somers to hold on to the Shaftesbury proxy vote in the Lords.

Almost at the end of his active political career Shaftesbury had published, again anonymously, a political pamphlet. It was based upon the address of King William to Parliament in which the King called for unity in the face of the French threat. This was at the close of 1701, and Shaftesbury's pamphlet appeared in March of the following year. It was not essentially a work of political philosophy, more a polemic for the particular occasion. Somers and Shaftesbury may have worked in conjunction here, for Somers is usually credited with having written the King's speech, and the

24. BL Add MSS 4743, fol.156, Cropley to Davenant, 7 December 1704

25. Maurice Cranston, *op.cit.*, p 472.

pamphlet is close to this. It was entitled Paradoxes of State and its main theme was to suggest that old distinctions no longer applied but that the main true English interest could be embraced under the anti-French, anti-Popery programme, and all others being enemies to the true interest of the state.²⁶

In 1702 Shaftesbury also produced a short work which was not published. The Adept Lady's Sect appears amongst the Shaftesbury papers in a form which suggests that it was to be circulated in manuscript form among Shaftesbury's acquaintance.²⁷

In the Adept Lady's Sect Shaftesbury purported to describe how he had become entangled in the activities of some Enthusiasts. It was a letter to be sent to his brother Maurice. It gives an account of how some friends, having become part of a sect, a group of followers of a 'Quaker Woman' sought to engage Shaftesbury, and the ridiculous ideas they entertained as a result of their belief in the supernatural skills of the Adept Lady. Shaftesbury ridicules their credulity, points to the dangers to morality associated with such enthusiasms, and then somewhat eagerly, as if being ironic, calls upon his brother to reflect upon the moderate and sensible character of the established Church.. The fourth Earl, mentioning

26. PRO 30/24/44/79 MS of Paradoxes of State; the printed version is at PRO 30/24/20/68. *Infra*, Chapter Three.

27. PRO 30/24/46/81 Two copies of The Adept Lady's Sect
PRO 30/24/46A/90 The attribution of a further manuscript An Essay on Public Vertue to the third Earl or his father appears erroneous, for it seems probable that this was written by Charles Davenant, and sent to Shaftesbury in the belief that he might share its sentiments. There is a fair copy in the Harleian Miscellany, attributed to Davenant; *infra* Chapter Three.

this in his Sketch of his father's life, suggested that this supported his claim that the third Earl was not opposed to the Church of England. It may be recorded that the established Church was not likely to have viewed the publication of the Adept Lady's Sect with any degree of gratitude.²⁸

The Paradoxes of State and the Adept Lady's Sect may together be regarded as early works that show other aspects of Shaftesbury's purposive approach, for in both there is some ironic intent. Both were designed to achieve an end as well as to entertain or divert.

The Sociable Enthusiast was the product of the second journey into Holland. Foreshadowing the Moralists, it represented the culmination of a period of philosophising which is characterised by Shaftesbury's attempts to apply philosophy in his own case. Where initially it may have seemed that to philosophise was to apply the intellect to some problem which though philosophical might have been suggested by Locke or Lady Masham, to accidental questions as it were, in the notebooks which Shaftesbury started on his visits to Holland, there is the foundation of a philosophy which is both more personal and more systematic, a philosophy which can be practised and which was to underpin that of the Characteristics.²⁹

Upon his return and following his recovery in 1705, perhaps after conversations with Somers, Shaftesbury was persuaded that such talents could be of use to a wider public, and after 1706, when he

28. Rand, p xxvii

29. Infra, Chapter Four

began to remark the not-too-dissimilar position of Horace as commentator on the manners of an age, the third Earl began to explore the possibilities of writing in such a fashion as might help his political friends and the general cause of Whiggism, and at the same time facilitate the introduction of the subject-matter of philosophy, of what is right and proper, before a wider audience, that is, to the socialising of philosophy. The several parts, or treatises of the Characteristics, may be viewed in this setting. The first two having a content more immediately relevant to the age to which they were addressed, and the Inquiry and the Moralists being less so.

Despite his formulation of a philosophy which he was to use as the basis of his own code of conduct, and in spite of the knowledge that the illness of 1704-5 had left him unable to pursue the active life that he might have wished, Shaftesbury soon found that old ties and influences were at work upon him. For example, Awnsham Churchill, the bookseller, established himself in the neighbourhood of St Giles and wrote to the third Earl of the prospects for the 1705 election. Elsewhere, Shaftesbury played down his involvement, but although he personally may not have been involved in the hectic events of an election, events proceeded more favourably than he had at first anticipated, which could not have come about had he withdrawn all support.

He maintained a role as an unofficial channel of communication with the Dutch. While the ministry had the usual access to its allies in the war against France, such was the animosity, potential for the most part, between rival trading nations, that mutual

suspicion ran high. It was not surprising therefore that any useful unofficial contacts be utilised. One such link was Shaftesbury's acquaintance with the English Quaker merchant in Rotterdam, Benjamin Furly. The friendship derived from the days of Locke's staying in Rotterdam before the Revolution, but at the early part of the war Shaftesbury realised that through Furly he had an access to some influence in Dutch councils. Shaftesbury corresponded in such a way as to suggest that the war against France and the Anglo-Dutch alliance had firm support in the people. On balance, Shaftesbury was inclined to put the case in favour of the 'Country' aspect at first, and in favour of the Whigs later. The correspondence should not be viewed as without bias, nor should that bias be seen as being altogether unconscious. Furly appears to have had access to some of the 'Commonwealth' or republican party in Holland who had not always supported William. As the war progressed, this connection diminished, but the correspondence was maintained and had occasional uses beyond those of friendship and mutual interest in politics.

One such occasional use was the opportunity afforded to assist Furly's son Arent to secure a position on the staff of Lord Peterborough, the Lord Mordaunt of earlier times, when the latter was the allied General in Spain. After Arent Furly's death and Peterborough's withdrawal, Shaftesbury had one of his own junior associates appointed to General James Stanhope's staff.

In a wider context, Shaftesbury also had, from Locke, access to leading figures in the "Republique des Lettres"; Basnage de Beauval, Jean le Clerc, and Pierre Bayle. It was Bayle whom Shaftesbury had occasion to assist, when the former was in some danger of being

forced to give up a position he held because of political pressure by persons who did not think highly of Bayle's scepticism when applied to politics. Shaftesbury, after failing to persuade Bayle to retract the views which had offended, wrote to Sunderland, then Secretary of State, that Bayle represented no danger to Anglo-Dutch relations and was best left alone. Sunderland, despite a reputation for a high temper on behalf of the cause, concurred, and Bayle remained unharmed. Shaftesbury and Bayle differed on principles but such was the latter's disposition that Shaftesbury seems to have found the difference a rewarding one rather than a cause for antagonism.

Pierre Des Maiseaux, one of the small band of translators and popularisers of works of leading writers acted for Bayle in the matters mentioned above. Shaftesbury became acquainted with Des Maiseaux through Pierre Bayle, brought him to England in 1699, and later Des Maiseaux established himself in a Huguenot Church in London. Shaftesbury had proposed in 1701 that Des Maiseaux translate the Inquiry although this project was not completed. Des Maiseaux was later acquainted with Anthony Collins who was of the opinion that Coste and Shaftesbury had not entirely played fair with his acquaintance Locke, whom they had approved while he lived, and criticised after his death.³⁰

30. Des Maiseaux, Collins, and others of this post-Shaftesbury group of freethinkers are well represented in BL Add MSS 4282 Fols. 114, 135, 192. A succinct sketch of Des Maiseaux is at Paul Hazard, The European Mind 1680-1715, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964) p. 92. (An English translation of La Crise de la conscience europeene, Paris, 1935.) Shaftesbury and Des Maiseaux correspondence and the translation of the Inquiry are at PRO 30/24/27/17 and 30/24/21/227 respectively; and BL Add MSS 4288 fols. 95-105.

Shaftesbury's relations with individuals in Holland were, then formed on an individual basis, although given the facts of the time, the persistent warfare and the social status of Shaftesbury which meant, in appearance at least, that he had access to leading politicians, it is not surprising that these relations sometimes turned to politics, for this was an interest that Shaftesbury shared as well as his friends. In essence, however the basis of the majority of these friendships was intellectual interests rather than political affinities. Moreover, just as Shaftesbury went to Holland in a private capacity, he seems to have lived there in a similar way. He does not record attending any group or informal gathering that might even be construed as intellectually oriented. As was predominantly the case in his politics, Shaftesbury appears to have liked rather to think matters through for himself and by himself, as opposed to discussing a subject and agreeing to the consensus conclusion.

One feature of this insular, rather than convivial way of behaving, was that Shaftesbury was not always able to assist his friends in the ways that might have been expected in those times. Although he could arrange for the appointment of young men to the junior places of an officer's staff, a predominantly private arrangement, he had much more difficulty in obtaining a place for another of his associates. The letters of Addison to Halifax are illustrative of the importuning that occurred.³¹ Swift was among those who thought that the Junto could have served him better, as

31. Addison to Halifax, BL Add MSS 7121; Davenant, who later became Inspector General of Trade and Secretary to the Commission on the Union, BL Add MSS 7121 fol. 19.

is well known. Charles Davenant solicited a place from Charles Montagu but followed Harley and the New Country Party, when not rewarded; later when he was rewarded, the author of a True Picture of a Modern Whig became quiescent. Promised a place for Thomas Micklethwaite by William III, Shaftesbury tried many times before after some eight years he obtained a place in the administration of troop Transports. In that time, Marlborough, Godolphin, Somers, Sunderland and Robert Molesworth had all been involved and it seems probable that shifts in the ministry as much as Shaftesbury's persistence accounted for his eventual success.

Shaftesbury is perhaps the more interesting because he was neither truly 'in' nor was he until 1710, truly 'out'. He was out of office, of course, and for the most part he was out of the social and political round, but in his activity he managed to involve himself to a much greater extent than some of his fellow peers. He did not retreat as Shrewsbury had done, but continued to pursue the public life until retirement was called for, and after recuperation went back again. This is all the more surprising when it is remembered that for much of the reign of Anne, his inclinations lay away from those who held office.

Shaftesbury passed much of his time close to London, but outside the town; after his return from Holland most of this time he was at Chelsea, but he had other residences. He would stay at the Surrey residence of Sir John Cropley, from whom he could get a regular account of events in the Commons, where Cropley sat as Member for Shaftesbury on the third Earl's interest. He corresponded from Betchworth in Surrey, and it was at Betchworth Castle that Phillipa Brown, sister to the first Earl of Shaftesbury, had

lived to a great age, dying in 1701. Shortly before his marriage, the third Earl bought a house at Reigate presumably fairly close to Somers' residence and lived there after 1709. Some of the time, he returned to St Giles, where he was more fortunate than his father, his Steward Wheelock proving a good servant to the family. So even in the middle years, Shaftesbury was by no means inactive or immobile because of his illness.

In 1708 he had published his Letter Concerning Enthusiasm. Ostensibly connected with the presence of a sect, the French Prophets which had occasioned some social disorder and public nuisance, the Letter contained a critique that was more broadly aimed against fanaticism and dogmatism. When viewed against the background of uneasiness and discontent that characterised a part of the ecclesiastical establishment after the Revolution, Shaftesbury's Letter can be seen as part of a design to create a more tolerant atmosphere. For his pains, Shaftesbury was rewarded with at least three critical retorts.

The next year Shaftesbury had published Serius Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour and The Moralists. A Philosophical Rhapsody. The first represented the approach of the Letter extended somewhat further. The second, Shaftesbury's own views in constructive rather than critical form, may not have obtained the reception Shaftesbury had hoped for. In 1710 therefore, he had printed Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author which represented a bridging work between Shaftesbury's positive views and his critical work. In December he had completed a major revision of the surreptitiously published Inquiry and a volume of Miscellaneous Reflections which contained further thought upon his

several pieces. These were then ordered into his work Characteristics, and referred to in a preliminary note as 'these presents' after the manner of royal patents, a hint perhaps at the status of the author, and printed thus;

'CHARACTERISTICKS OF MEN, MANNERS, OPINIONS, TIMES.'

In three Volumes.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Vol.I, | I. A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm |
| | II. Sensus Communis, or an Essay on Wit etc. |
| | III. Soliloquy, or Advice to an author. |
| Vol.II, | IV. An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit. |
| | V. The Moralists: A Philosophical Rhapsody. |
| Vol.III, | VI. Miscellaneous Reflections on the said |
| | Treatises, and other critical subjects. ³² |

Although all these separate editions and the Characteristics of 1711 appeared anonymously, their authorship was publicly known within three years on the appearance of a second edition, corrected by Micklethwaite, with a portrait, in 1714.

Shaftesbury sent letters with some of the treatises to his friend Lord Somers. With the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm, he had affirmed his belief that Philosophy and Statesmanship were connected and hinted that a proficiency in the last would best be obtained by a study of the first. In the second essay, Sensus Communis, he was acting more diplomatically, suggesting to Somers that the unfortunate reaction set off by the Letter might not have done Somers any good, if the views expressed in the Letter had been taken to represent those of Somers (who held office at this time), and that the dedication was for that reason less obvious. The

32. BL Index of Printed Books: The Inquiry was sometimes referred to as '...Virtue or Merit' and other times as '...Virtue and Merit', (vide. Baskerville edition, 1773); Entries under Cooper, Anthony Ashley, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury

letters that accompanied the various parts, as well as the volumes of the Characteristics, are significant in that being addressed to Somers, they acknowledge a connection between the social and political world and that world which is conveniently described in the phrase 'republique des lettres'.

Shaftesbury's position in respect of the literary conventions of the times was somewhat unusual, for he was a patron and had few social equals, Locke for example, had been able to dedicate some of his work to Lord Pembroke, Shaftesbury's social position tended to exclude a dedication to a fellow of the socio-intellectual world; such a man as Bayle might once have had sufficient status among contemporaries, but Bayle was dead, Shaftesbury's anonymity may be explained in relation to such difficulties.

Shaftesbury married in 1709, and in February 1711 his son was born. Lord Halifax was requested to act as godfather to the young child, and to ensure that he was given a Whig upbringing. Shortly before this, Shaftesbury had decided that he would have to leave the country if he wished to live for very much longer. His illness had grown progressively more debilitating. The Characteristics was in print, his son and heir well, and Shaftesbury determined to leave for the warmer climate of Italy. He wrote a series of farewell letters, whilst he pressed the Tory Ministry to arrange for his passport, and solicited permission to travel through France despite the hostilities between the countries.

Shaftesbury's political friends and acquaintances, were in fact, also in eclipse. After the fall of the Junto supported Godolphin-Marlborough Ministry, Somers suffered from increasingly poor health. Halifax survived to return to power, and Sunderland, at one time a new member of the Commons with Shaftesbury, also

returned after the death of the Queen. Harley was at this time chief minister and to him Shaftesbury wrote a dignified farewell, hinting at the common principles that they had shared some ten years earlier. In fact, the political wind was to blow against men of Shaftesbury's opinions, for the rest of his life.

Shaftesbury left Reigate in June 1711, having made his Will the previous December. He travelled through Dover, Calais, Paris, Dijon, Lyons and Turin before reaching Naples. Perhaps he had determined to travel by land after his experiences in the North Sea in 1704, but a land journey could have proved more debilitating and this appears to have been the case, for Shaftesbury was in a weak condition when he arrived at his destination. Subsequently his 'family' fell ill and he had to fend for them, one of his servants determined to come home, and it was some time before he could set his affairs in order.

However, when these difficulties had at length been overcome, he began to cast around for useful employment. He corresponded with Furlly as ever, with Robert Molesworth's son, John, who at that time was British Resident at Florence, and with a Mr Chetwynd who held a similar office in Turin. He wrote to Cropley with whom Lord Ashley, his son, was staying. Most frequently of all, he wrote to Thomas Micklethwaite, whom he had charged with seeing that the revisions that he envisaged for the second edition of the Characteristics were applied. This Shaftesbury did with a mixture of cajolery, insult and great persistence. His revisions were

very detailed.³³

He contemplated at this time a work upon politics, but determined that it would be too great a task, requiring too much close attention. He also thought, when events in England had taken a displeasing turn, that he might write of politics at the time when he had been active, thinking perhaps to rattle a few skeletons. He did not do so, and we cannot be sure that there were many skeletons to rattle. His observations in his correspondence were tempered by an awareness that it would probably be opened, so in addition we cannot be sure how free he felt to express therein what he really thought. It can be said that his interest in politics was sustained, and that he did not altogether approve of the way events were developing, suspecting and fearing a treacherous peace would be concluded.

He began to follow instead 'virtuoso studies', paintings, medals and antiquities, but especially the graphic arts. One of his favorite works had been the Judgement of Hercules related in Xenophon's Memorabilia. He commissioned an artist to depict the choice of Hercules, between Pleasure and Virtue, and wrote a small essay upon the subject, delineating the 'moral' of the painting. More interested, he wrote a general Letter Concerning Design, which was to be sent to Somers, in which he described the fortunes that had altered the position of the arts in England since the reign of Charles II. He determined that he would send it accompanied by The Fable of the Oaks, Pines and Pinasters, a fable which allegor-

33. Rand, passim

ically described the Court's attempts to form ministry's without the support of one or other of the major parties, the Oaks being the Whigs; the Pines, the Tories. This had been written some time before.

In the event, he had A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature, of the Judgment of Hercules printed in the Journal des Scavans in 1712 and the English version appeared the next year.³⁴

The Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design appeared in the second edition of the Characteristics but its appearance in subsequent editions has been spasmodic.³⁵ It is more significant to the historian of ideas than has perhaps been realised, as it stands against the baroque Palaces of Vanbrugh and the Churches of Wren, on cultural grounds as well as aesthetic grounds, attacking Wren, for example, as an example of a Court architect.³⁶

34. Journal des Scavans 52, (Paris, 1712)

35. Apparently only some of the second edition contained the Letter Concerning Design. The copy in the British Library does so. In the Baskerville edition of 1773 it sometimes appears for the Judgment of Hercules. A bibliographical analysis would need to start from William E Alderman, 'Bibliographical Evidence of the Vogue of Shaftesbury in the Eighteenth Century', Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters XXI. 1926, pp 57-70

36. Shaftesbury's 'aesthetic' works were collected and printed by Benjamin Rand in 1914. They include the Letter Concerning Design, A notion of the Historical Draught of Hercules, a translation of The Picture of Cebes and some preliminary notes for a more comprehensive work, Plastics. This last is most important from the viewpoint of the history of aesthetics, but also reflects Shaftesbury's concern to make such a work meaningful to his readers in a social dimension. Benjamin Rand, Second Characters or The Language of Forms (Cambridge 1914).

Shaftesbury was concerned with the reception afforded to the Characteristics and wanted Micklewaite to keep him informed as to its impact. He thought that the slow start that it appears to have made was attributable to the critics of the country being divided into a Whig and Tory faction, with the latter in the ascendancy. The absence of critical response, he thought was the deliberate consequence of Tory policy, in which the Whigs had concurred. He was most gratified to hear of Stanhope's reception of the book, and Stanhope he viewed as a promising prospect among a new generation of Whig leaders.

We shall be concerned with Shaftesbury's character, insofar as it sheds light upon the Characteristics, and is to some extent necessary in understanding the purpose of the author. Two features at least are worth remarking, before passing to a more detailed examination of particular aspects. The one is Shaftesbury's persistence in returning to the world of action, to the 'real' world of politics that was co-existing with that of Letters. The second is the aspect which is illustrated by Shaftesbury's movement between these two 'worlds' such as may be viewed as movement between the town and country, between the public person of St Giles and the private person of Holland, between the zealous politician and the man who professes that he hardly knows what way the political wind is blowing, even between the patron and guide and the man who sought both patron and guide in Somers and Locke. His death in February 1713, came only a short time before the Peace of Utrecht and the death of Anne, the last of the Stuarts. His life can be fitted neatly upon those dates that Hazard has chosen

as guidelines with which to detect La Crise de la Conscience
Europeene; or it may be envisaged as stretching from Restoration
to the pre-dawn of the Hanoverians. Certainly, we can say that
Shaftesbury lived at an unusually eventful time

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT:

THE EMERGENCE OF SHAFTESBURY'S PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING

Shaftesbury came to philosophy gradually, his interest being stimulated, and then declining, and then stimulated once more, and so on. Here the intention is that some of the main features, the intellectual and cultural influences, which appear to have characterised the path of this development, should be traced. They will be sketched in outline only, since some of these influences, studied in their own right, would require much more attention and explanation than is appropriate or indeed possible at this place.

Shaftesbury's formative period appears to have extended from 1687 to 1694, by which time he appears to have determined what he wanted from his philosophical studies, if not at that time, fully how to obtain his purpose. There is not a great deal that we know about Shaftesbury in these early years, but an attempt will be made to present an account that is consistent both with his later development, and particularly in respect of the construction of the Characteristics, and also with the intellectual and cultural currents of the time.

England in the closing years of Charles II's reign, and during that part of the reign of James II during which Shaftesbury was in the country, was not conscious of any cultural ascendancy.

Shaftesbury was later to remark upon this himself.¹ Such developments as there were, in Art, Music and Architecture, he subsequently regarded as being dominated by too great an influence from the Court, and by emulation of foreign models.

It was during the Grand Tour, that Shaftesbury seems to have come into direct contact with the dominant cultural and intellectual fashions of the time. His account of the Grand Tour is such as would not readily lend itself to the conclusion that here was a man whose formed opinions included an aversion to Courts. Although, he generally expresses himself in a way that is not favourable to the Court, he does not travel privately, or seek out the opportunity to evade attendance.²

Courts, it may be remarked, were seen as bad influences on the character, tending to enslave mind and body by corrupting the independent gentleman, in addition to their being sources of political corruption in the state, whereby the Crown could distort the Polybian balance to its own advantage, thus bringing about the decay of the State.³

At this level however, it might be best to limit observations in the first instance to the mere suggestion of juxtaposition.

1. Benjamin Rand, ed., Second Characters or the Language of Forms p 20
2. Rand, pp 273-4. Shaftesbury to Locke, 22 December 1687
pp 275-80. Shaftesbury to the second Earl, 3 May 1689.
3. The Literature on Courts is considerable. J.G.A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli', Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', in Politics, Language and Time (London: Methuen & Co., 1972) Chapter 4. passim.

The evidence is insufficient to support the attribution of probabilities of causation. Shaftesbury was in France, in Paris, visited the French Court at the acme of its cultural hegemony over Europe. Political and military success under Louis XIV would, we may infer, have raised the spirit of the capital's population, sufficiently to make it contrast with the uneasiness of England and Holland. It is improbable that Shaftesbury could have stayed in Paris without being in some way affected by prevalent manners, even if they were not always to his liking.⁴ The dominance of the French in language, letters and manners, uneven perhaps but substantial, has to be born in mind when considering the context in which Shaftesbury wrote.⁵

In 1687 Shaftesbury had visited Locke, subsequently corresponding with him through Benjamin Furly in Rotterdam. The books he left with Locke were wide-ranging but also, for the most part, recent publications. In addition to intellectual and conversational stimulants provided by Locke, Shaftesbury would also have had the opportunity to witness the establishment of the final stages of that apparatus for the dissemination of review and critical opinion which was made up from Bayle's Nouvelles de la republique des lettres, of Le Clerc's Bibliothèque universelle et historique

4. Rand. pp 273-4. Shaftesbury to Locke. 22 December 1687

5. Shaftesbury was anti-French in his sentiments, beyond the impulse of patriotism and religion, though these were major elements of Letter Concerning Design.

and of Basnage de Beauval's Histoire des Ouvrages des savants.⁶

Shaftesbury was later to correspond with all three of these luminaries.

Holland and France were the centres of international cultural activity. How much of this activity Shaftesbury was aware of, how much he assimilated, and to what degree he comprehended the significance of the changes that were coming about, must remain matters of conjecture. However, it is not without interest that Shaftesbury contemplated travelling to Holland shortly after his return from the Tour - in 1691 when he envisaged staying as a private gentleman near Furly in Rotterdam. Further, he sent his brother Maurice accompanied by Denoune, to study at the University of Leyden, shortly thereafter.

On his return to England Shaftesbury went to his home county. It was not long, however, before he began to make something of the limited opportunities afforded by this retreat. In August 1689 he started a philosophical correspondence with Locke which however hesitant and encumbered, marks the beginning of Shaftesbury's progress towards the Characteristics.⁷

He refers to his inability upon an earlier occasion to express his ideas to Locke when they had met. Rather than accept Locke's subsequent absence as a sign that his ideas were of doubtful value, he says, that they then asserted themselves all the more strongly.⁸

6. Hazard, op cit p. 98

7. Bodleian Library, MS Locke, c.7, fol 85. Endorsed 'August 89'

8. There is something of a literary "device" here, perhaps; a similar protestation is to be found in Characteristics ii, 26

Shaftesbury's attempt is based upon the distinction that Locke had made for him between what was material, i.e. Matter, and what was not. He wishes to consider the position of Thought in this area, is it material or not? What are the consequences which follow?

He is handicapped by a certain diffidence which leads him to assume a rather affected style, at the outset. This affected manner, the assumption that Locke will have forgotten what the conversation was about, it being too insignificant ^{for} a thinker such as he, and that Shaftesbury himself is not taking the exercise too seriously, detract from the possibilities of the paper. The main problem however, is philosophical, and of interest to the historian of philosophy in that it derives from the difficulties Shaftesbury finds himself in, and illustrates as a result the conceptual framework that he is bounded by, of matter or immateriality.⁹

Locke has said, says Shaftesbury, that anything that was material could not be part of the soul, and further that the only immateriality lay in Thought. Shaftesbury asks what happens to Thought if it is not appropriated to a body, what else is Thought? but the impact of ideas of natural objects upon the senses? Ideas, which constitute Thought, and are therefore immaterial, cannot be derived from natural objects.

Shaftesbury is here pointing the way to some of the difficulties that confronted Locke in his concept of 'idea', which in the Essay

9. Also for these reasons the argument is rather difficult to present coherently; its wider significance justifies the attempt.

Locke attempted to resolve.¹⁰ Shaftesbury, however, focuses upon the material/immaterial distinction.

Shaftesbury asks how it is that illness can affect thinking, as we know it does, can there be an intermediate position between material and immaterial? These questions he raises as if they were points drawn to his attention by Locke, and also as points which Locke needed to answer.

Shaftesbury then explores the possibility of Thought being immaterial, and of the correlation between independent (of matter) beings successfully equating with the notion of souls of men. Here, he is of the opinion that when matter is removed from the discussion then all thought is resolved into one being. This much concerns the identity of souls.

Shaftesbury then defines thought:

'...I define Thought as a name given, not to the power whereby animated bodies are prepared and rendered capable of receiving the impressions of Ideas, (for that nature alone is to give an account of, and how matter in some bodies is animated and in others not) but to the Action, the evident working of exterior objects by their Ideas on Sensible creatures who receive them either by the immediate forcible(presentation?) of the objects to the senses; or more remotely and indirectly from the impressions they have left.' 11.

10. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding 1690, 5th ed abridged, (London, Collins, Fontana Library, 1969), Book Two.
11. Bodleian Library, M.S. Locke c.7. fol. 85. Under this definition thought becomes external to man; the role of the individual, I think, being much the same as that of the conventional views of molecular behaviour, namely that behaviour of all is controlled by forces which do not inhere in the substance of the atom; that occasional deviations are possible without causing me to say that there is no 'norm' of behaviour. Shaftesbury's ideas appear to be influenced by Spinoza's work.

Shaftesbury touches upon the ability to form ideas in the world outside man, that is in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Here, he may be referring to the contemporary Cartesian issue of whether or not animals had souls or could think.

His account of truth is interesting in that he argues that 'just orderly and full' ideas come after a time to form a 'fixed Idea' and that a 'general Comprehensive Idea' that springs from this way of proceeding will be true. The 'conclusive ideas' that, on the contrary, derive from weak confused, deceitful or imperfect ideas, will prove defective, corrupt, uncertain, false.'

For Shaftesbury, the immateriality aspect is a non-question. What happens is that from the mechanistic account of the derivation of simple ideas, we proceed to their accumulation, rearrangement by the mind, transmission, until we have a body of thought that appears independent, so far has it been altered from its original source, and to which we are tempted to give the character of immateriality.

Philosophically, Shaftesbury's reflections are interesting and should not be dismissed as immature and incoherent contributions. They require further attention, perhaps, from historians of philosophy, for they show an awareness of the content and nature of philosophical argument of the time.

In his concluding remarks, Shaftesbury speaks of his longing to see Locke's book, i.e. the Essay, which he hopes will afford enlightenment upon this subject. It is probable that this philosophical contribution from Shaftesbury was written too late to materially affect Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

In previous conversation, however, Shaftesbury may have suggested philosophical points that Locke had felt constrained to consider in his work.

Shaftesbury's attempt contrasts with his later efforts where he assumes more seriousness of purpose, the impression that is left here being one of cleverness and dexterity, rather than one of intellectual commitment to the discovery of the truth of matter. In that sense, Shaftesbury may be seen as being more akin to the pupil or student than to the fellow inquirer in the nature of understanding.

Significance may also be seen in his consideration of the animal and vegetable world, which suggests a broader view of the subject than emerged from Locke, who for the most part wrote of 'human understanding' and human affairs. Shaftesbury gives some hint as to his hierarchical alternative to mechanism, although this is undeveloped. At this time Shaftesbury seems to side rather with the materialists than otherwise, which is in contrast to his later views and is of relevance to the difference with Locke, upon innate ideas.

Locke seems to have been acceptably pleased with Shaftesbury's early efforts and, in conjunction with Damaris Masham, appears to have encouraged this diversion. In the meantime, Shaftesbury was finding country life and the social round, oppressive to the point where it was rapidly becoming overwhelming. His letters to Locke become more contrived, even effeminate, although there may have been a certain fashionability of the time that was in turn, affecting

Shaftesbury.¹² In 1691, he wrote to Locke, to thank him for his assistance in a financial transaction involving Lord Pembroke and the Shaftesbury family;

'....But I perceive from the beginning of my Letter hetherto, I am hed'd in with a style meerly Clownish Rude and Barberouse; infected with the Practice of Life and Objects I have continually before me Here (i.e. St Giles) where I have now been a longer time to my sorrow than ever since I knew my Self. It is impossible for me to write anything pleasant or to pretend to Politeness: for if itt be but a Phrase or a Term of Buisness (sic) or Art belonging to that Brutall state call'd a Country-Life; that upon any occasion, as itt will doe thrusts it self in; It is enough to spoyle the best sentence in the world, or make the best Thought of but insipid relish. I cannot chuse indeed but be exceedingly luscious for I find a sort of naturall Illiterate Chimistry here that has extracted all my Salt. This makes mee out of all Patience to see how meer mechanicall our Frames are, and gives me a Shrewd longing to renew the dispute again with you, of our Absolute ~~Materiallity~~: But that I am but too sensible, that in the Condition my Spirit or Immaterial Substance is at present, and in the manner that it hangs together, I am very unfitt for disputation....' ¹³

Despite these incapacities, Shaftesbury found time to comment upon Locke's account of the foppery that was then prevalent at Bath. Shaftesbury thought that fopperies should be regarded as the natural excretions of a rich soil, a by-product of civilised society. From where he is placed Shaftesbury says he looks upon such existences with some envy, without which he would not like the world so much. Shaftesbury is complaining of the barrenness of his own existence as well as making the point that it takes 'all kinds' and, that as far as he is concerned, the more kinds with which to divert himself, the better the world will seem. It is significant

12. Bodleian Library MS Locke c.7. fols. 87⁸⁸, 89 Shaftesbury to Locke, 11 October and 15 November 1689.

13. loc.cit, fol 94. Shaftesbury to Locke. August 1691.

that he sets his position in the context of 'necessary evils' which go to make up a better whole, as this position later became a fundamental part of his own theories.

Concluding with a statement that he has, at St. Giles, reached a state of perfect insensibility, Shaftesbury closes his letter, only to add a postscript to the effect that he did not know what he was saying and asking Locke's forgiveness!

The next major turning point comes in 1694. Shaftesbury then seems to have pursued his philosophical studies with a rather different fervour than had been the case to this time. He wrote to Locke a long statement of the nature and motivation of his philosophical studies.

These studies were aimed at enabling him to communicate more sociably and to act as a friend, he said. They were not designed to gain personal credit for the author, or to provide the world with a diversion. Moreover, unlike some system-builders (who gained credit by denigration or revival of older systems than their own) Hobbes, Descartes and their 'improvers', Shaftesbury did not seek to make discoveries. If he made such a discovery he would contemplate concealing it again. Men, in his view ^{knew} enough already; what they lacked was the desire or ability to apply their knowledge.

This was not solely the cry of the moralist, but seems to have been backed by a prototype philosophy, which later was to receive additional consideration and development, although here the moral purpose is most evident.

More knowledge will not make man a better or more honest creature

sufficient is to hand:

'...If there be any one that knows not, or believes not that all things in the Universe are done for the best, and will ever go on so because conducted by the same Good Cause. If there be any one who knows nothing like this of God, or can think of him constantly in this manner and who cannot see that he himself is a rational and sociable creature by his nature and has an end to which he should refer his slightest actions; such a one is indeed wanting in knowledge.....' 14

No other study or science signifies anything, is not worth a 'rush' leaf in Shaftesbury's opinion, unless it assents man to pursue that end which constitutes both his duty and his good; and so he continues:

'...there is not then, one study or science that signifies a rush, or that is not worse then ignorance, which gives man no help in the pursuance of what he has learnt to be his duty; assists him not in the government of the irrational and brutal part of himself, which, neither makes him more truly satisfied with what God does in the world (for that is loving God), nor more sociable, more honest or more just, by removing of those passions which he has always to struggle with, that he may preserve himself so. If there are any other sciences that are worthy of esteem; they are what must relate to the well being of mankind in Society: and on that account a button maker is to be esteemed if he improves his art and adds some conveniency to life. But how the founders of metaphysics, of rhetoric and the arts of reasoning upon everything and never coming to an end, of the arts that lie in words, the turns of them, and the divisions that may be run upon them; how, I say, these men came to be preferred to the commonest mechanics I can't well tell. Anciently these notable inquisitive men were called by a name that they thought themselves highly honoured with and aspired no further. They were called Sophists: and never expected to be treated in the style of Philosophers or Professours of Philosophy. Who were true Philosophers those wise men showed (for amongst them the name came up) that were in early times in Greece, whom the fancy of the people that succeeded put into a certain number and called Seven,¹⁵ though the number was far greater

14. Bodleian Library, MS Locke, C.7, Shaftesbury to Locke, / fol. 112 29 September 1694
 15. Seven is a meaningful and significant number in mysticism; Infra on Cambridge Platonism.

er; of whom not one but that he was remarkable for some signal service to his Commonwealth, who were all united in the strictest friendship and by good offices and helps to one another and whose study was that of knowing themselves and learning how to be serviceable to others. When Socrates lived it was still thus, for he made the Sophists know themselves and keep their distance but when after his death the Socratic spirit sunk much, then began Philosophy and Sophistry to be better acquainted; but it was never known till more late days that to profess Philosophy was not to profess a Life; and ~~yet~~ it might be said of one that He was a great man in Philosophy whilst nobody thought it to the purpose to ask how did he live? What instances of his fortitude, Contempt of Interest, Patience etc. What is Philosophy then if nothing of this is in the case? What signifies it to know (if we could know) what element earth was made from, or how many atoms went to make up the round ball we live upon; though we knew it to an atom? What signifies it to know whether the Chaos was cast in Dr. Burnet's mould or if God did it a quite different way' 16

Thus Shaftesbury once again addresses himself to the pointlessness, as he views it, of this kind of learning. Man's business is to know himself, in the sense of the knowledge of character and self, that Shaftesbury believed the Greeks had intended. This kind of knowledge, he concludes, is:

'... sufficiently despised, for who is there that can think so much to the dishonour and prejudice of himself as to think that he has odious vices within him which only labour and exercise can throw out? or who, if he sees sometimes any such ill sights in himself, can endure to look on that side long, but turns to that other side which his flatterers (and himself the greatest of them) always readily present to him. To look to our Bodies, our Fortunes, is a solid and serious work and has been i.e., and will keep in good fashion with the world...'

However, it is not just in this one letter that Shaftesbury shows this moral concern. In letters written shortly before he entered

16. Much of this is derived from Diogenes Laertius. with Shaftesbury giving his interpretation of the meaning of the "lives of the eminent philosophers". Diogenes Laertius, Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, 1, 1-102.

the House of Commons in February 1695, he shows a similar concern with the moral aspect of his task, and the morality and manners of the world in which he is to act. A matter of two weeks earlier he had written ironically of the times:

'We have a refined, polite and delicious age; whatever opposes what is established here is rude, barbarous, deformed; and whatever has a contrary taste is contemptible. The standard of good sense, of manners, pleasure virtue, everything is here. I acquiesce being very safe in this; that whatever is thought, or not thought concerning me in this adored age, and by the people adored in it, is likely to give me no great disturbance, which saves a man a great deal of pains, if one considers what employment this gives other people....' 27

The latter part of the year was spent in what may best be described as pre-political activities, with Shaftesbury apparently based upon London. He was not very impressed with the sort of people that he met, or he was emotionally in such a state of expectancy over the prospect of a public career that it was reflected in his letters. He wrote to Locke in November, that he would rather be in Essex, where Locke and Lady Masham were, than in London. He professed to be sceptical of the prospect of achieving anything in the public world which his 'ill-fortune' had forced upon him. Whatever the cause of this nervousness of affected indifference, Shaftesbury would be able to profess afterwards that he had never really wanted a public career. Another argument he employed was that it was his duty as a member of the country's 'Patrician' class to engage in public life.

These developments since 1687, the cultural influences of Holland and France, the rustivating tendencies at St. Giles, and

17. Rand, pp 296-7, Shaftesbury to Locke, 8 September 1694.

the support afforded by Locke and Lady Masham to Shaftesbury's private pursuits were essentially of a kind that may be regarded as personal, important insofar as they impacted upon Shaftesbury's views of the world.

Of a rather different kind were those intellectual currents with which he came into contact, in this early period. They are less clear, but from his early ethical writings, we may sketch out some features. There was the Cambridge Platonist influence, which may have come through Lady Masham, the daughter of Ralph Cudworth. Another stream would have been that non-intellectual scepticism, that 'libertinism', which was to be found in French and perhaps, in English court society. This was not an academic influence, although in sentiment it may have seemed at that time to be akin to a much more seriously proposed argument, that of Bayle and some of the associated Protestant theologians, who arguing for toleration of different opinion, sometimes found themselves further along the road to philosophical scepticism, academic or pyrrhonian, that they had ever thought to travel. Finally, there was what might be termed the Hobbes-Locke influence. This was later identified by Shaftesbury as the Democritus-Atomist-Epicurean-Hobbesian alternative to his own philosophy, the one being inclined to view the world as fragmented, selfish, calculating, the other seeing the world as co-ordinated, ordered, and man as a social being. At this period, Shaftesbury found it expressed best in the works of Hobbes,¹⁸ and it was not until later that the

18. Hobbes was, perhaps, the clearest exponent of a view that Shaftesbury believed current in philosophical and other circles.

focus upon innate ideas, replaced that of self-interest, as one of the main points of difference.

At this time also, it must be kept in mind that Shaftesbury was not treating these problems in such a way that might be regarded as scholarly, and that even when he did so, he seems on balance to have sought books to justify his opinions, rather than to form his opinions in accordance with a careful perusal of the materials available. It would, however be in order to anticipate and to add that Shaftesbury later engaged in research to support his case, on a personal level and in order that his philosophy be presented to a wider audience in a way congenial to the reader. In saying that the questions were to some degree prejudged, the approach a priori, we are not censuring Shaftesbury, but indicating the nature of his method in order that the end-product may be more readily understood.

By 1694, Shaftesbury had made clear the purpose of his philosophical studies. It was not the pursuit of knowledge by which he justified his activity, but rather the pursuit of moral improvement. From 1695 to 1698, we may recall that Shaftesbury was in the Commons and the task of philosophising may have been laid to one side for a period. However, by 1698 his introduction to whichcote's sermons was ready and his first public statement of views that were to be refined and amplified but not essentially changed, was printed in London. With his personal development in the background as it were, it is possible to look at these views in terms of the several traditions.

Cambridge Platonism cannot, of course, be reviewed in its entirety here. It was a third course, a third theological belief-

system that in the seventeenth century opposed, on the one hand, the High Church Anglicans or Laudians, and on the other hand, the more rigorous of the puritan elements whether Presbyterian or of other sects. In fact, it was philosophically a much more thorough-going belief-system than the immediate context of English religion at this time might suggest, and has been said to stand against the whole tradition of Christianity in the West, from Augustine to contemporary protestantism.¹⁹

Although there are different interpretations as to which of several thinkers were really 'Cambridge Platonists', in respect of Shaftesbury's interest, there can be little doubt as to those who were influential.²⁰ Priority would appear to go to Whichcote since it was his sermons that Shaftesbury wrote the Preface for, but in terms of Shaftesbury's thought, and ~~probably~~ his education, Cudworth emerges being equally as significant if not more so.

Benjamin Whichcote published nothing during his own lifetime. The Shaftesbury connection appears to have come through his friendship with Cudworth, the fact that Damaris Masham was Cudworth's daughter, that there was acquaintance through Locke, and hence to Shaftesbury.

Ralph Cudworth's work had been recommended by Locke in his work on Education, and may therefore also have been suggested for the

19. C.A. Patrides, ed., The Cambridge Platonists, (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p 4.

20. Cambridge Platonists: Benjamin Whichcote, (1609-1683) John Smith Henry More, Ralph Cudworth; (1617-1688) two others, Nathaneal Culverwell and Peter Sterry, are sometimes included, vide. Patrides, op cit, p xxvi.



use of Shaftesbury. The True Intellectual System of the Universe appeared in 1678.²¹ Cudworth was dead by this time although Shaftesbury may have made his acquaintance towards the end of the former's life.

These two feature as the main sources of Platonist thinking in Shaftesbury, although he also cited Henry More, another Platonist, in connection with enthusiasm in the Characteristics.

The Cambridge Platonists are to be viewed, insofar as they are a school, as promoting the idea of the sufficiency of reason, together with God's grace, in forming the basis of Christian belief. They were anti-doctrinaire, against ceremonial (or at least suggested lessening its importance) and against all forms of superstition and enthusiasm. Since the latter are important for Shaftesbury's critique of established religions, it may be as well to remark at this point that some times the two words take up a Catholic/Protestant sign^{fi}cation, to parallel Superstition/Enthusiasm, but that more usually they are found interchangeable. The Cambridge Platonists, moreover, represented an irenic alternative to the heated disputations of contemporary debate. Shaftesbury may be seen here as not merely being placed where he could make most use of a set of ideas, but also where he was subject to the influence of an attitude or disposition towards religion.

To read the Platonists and Shaftesbury, however, is an exercise

21. R. Cudworth, The True Intellectual System of the Universe: the First Part; wherein, all the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted; and its Impossibility Demonstrated. (1678): Patrides, op cit, p xi

which quickly highlights the marked differences. In Whichcote's Sermons there is the spirit of religion and sincerity, of a man who wished and wanted his audience to be better. Shaftesbury rarely reaches these kind of emotive heights, nor is he able to sustain them for long, so that at the end, the conclusion that perhaps he does not care about the subject matter is hard to resist. The Platonists have been said to have wished to restore unity to philosophy and religion.²² Shaftesbury's Inquiry would support the interpretation that he was concerned to keep orthodox religion away from morals, and moral philosophy. Shaftesbury was for a social man, a gentleman; the Platonists very much more for the scholarly, introspective and reflective seeker after truth, and God.

If the indefinable spirit of Whichcote cannot effectively be transmitted, the impact of Cudworth would seem to present less of a problem. He has been described as one of the 'Encyclopaedic Chroniclers of Atheism',²³ who drew upon vast erudition in order to refute materialism and atheism, as it were, by exposing the errors of the latter for all to see. In Shaftesbury, there is the early tendency also to look at the Greeks for the originals of learning. Cudworth and Shaftesbury both viewed Hobbes, as a new version of the atomism of Democritus.

In order that Shaftesbury's later acquaintance with mysticism might not seem too great an eccentricity, it may be worth remarking,

22. B. Willey, The English Moralists (London: Methuen, 1965) p 172.

23. J. Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976) Ch. Two pp 50-60.

not as an influence certainly, but as part of a shared intellectual climate that the Platonists had also touched upon the tradition of Trismegistus, the mythical philosopher, and Hermeticism, in which mysticism and science as they might now be called, combined.²⁴

From Cudworth we might see Shaftesbury deriving specific ideas that he was to use in the Characteristics. At this time however, little use is made of the idea of an active power of Nature, in Shaftesbury's earlier writings. On balance, Cudworth may be seen as a source for supporting argument and scholarship at the time of the Characteristics, rather than in this period, although his Intellectual System may have been echoed in Shaftesbury's sentiments against modern thinkers such as Hobbes, and in Shaftesbury's willingness to return to Greek sources, rather than to investigate contemporary views.

Whichcote, therefore was the central figure at this time. His character impressed contemporaries in a way that doctrine alone would have been unable to do. His Sermons seem kindly instructions, designed to illuminate rather than to exhort. Religion, he says - and he never seems to argue - is 'not a burthensome and troublesome Thing'. It is this spirit that Shaftesbury tries to point to, if unable to capture, in his Preface. In addition there are Shaftesburean ideas, in the Preface.

Shaftesbury begins with a little banter. He apologises for introducing yet another book of sermons to the public when there are already so many available. It is not only that so many are

24. Patrides, op cit, p 4

preached - but so many are then published:

'...notwithstanding the great Modesty of their Authors, whose Humble Thoughts, and devoutly resigned Affections, lead them not towards Eminence, and Advancement in the World!'

He then questions the usefulness of sermons to society, observing that when preaching and the pulpit lie in the service of the state, there is less likelihood of effecting 'any happy Revolution in Manners'. He asserts that neither government nor the ecclesiastical establishment have benefitted from their mutual association.

This is the social aspect of Shaftesbury's approach, wherein he directs his observations, more or less directly at his readers and their world.. They are not philosophical observations but they are social observations, written by a man who believes that he is well aware of that world. It need hardly be added that Shaftesbury is critical.

He then turns to the views found in the Sermons and sets them against those of Hobbes and the atheists. Hobbes, he says, in his account of human nature:

'...forgot to mention Kindness, Friendship, Sociableness, Love of Company and Converse, Natural Affection, or anything of this kind...'

Without the considerable diffusion of such principles as those of Hobbes, there would, Shaftesbury continues, be less talk of fear, less of rewards and punishments, and more of moral rectitude and good nature. In contrast, among the Ancients we find that the idea of piety included natural affection and good affection. In natural affection, Shaftesbury would include family-engendered affections.

Returning, perhaps, to his original style, Shaftesbury writes that the spirit of the Church of England is not one of 'moroseness, selfishness and ill-will towards mankind'; rather that by displaying just the opposite sort of a character the Church of England, demonstrates that above all others, it may be seen as 'most worthily and nobly Christian'.

Moreover, he is not finished with the Hobbesian elements yet, for he adds that those who lay stress upon the unsocial qualities in man are more likely to be atheists. On the other side to this he castigates those who have laid emphasis upon love and charity through the prospect of divine reward, or who have used fears of punishment to promote virtue. In addition to these are those who have felt the truth of Revelation or revealed religion to be under threat when man's good nature is indicated. All these have conspired against virtue, and it is from the 'Hobbists' and the 'Revelationists' that Shaftesbury seeks to protect 'Vertue'.

Whichcote, concludes Shaftesbury, ~~sum~~ virtue and vice as the foundation of peace and happiness, of sorrow and misery. Vice and vicious behaviour carries in it, its own 'punishment'. The Sermons Shaftesbury hopes, will not be without good, in a generation of young people who are growing to maturity opposed to sermons, preaching, the Gospels, and 'even our Holy Religion'.

It is possible to view Shaftesbury's activities here as the tracing out of the subsequent Shaftesbury framework or model, wherein the focus is fixed upon the reader rather than the scholarly structure or apparatus, and in which the theories which had come to be associated with the name of Hobbes, and the prevalent attitudes

of the established Church of England, both doctrinal and practical, are set up as targets for Shaftesbury to tilt at. This being so, and Shaftesbury having thought out the fundamentals of what he wished to project, his problems then become those of how best to project those views. Developments that might suggest themselves would be further clarification and structuring of his position, such that it attained intellectual vigour, and further, attempted to come to terms with the problem of how to present to the reader a closely and clearly reasoned argument in such a way as would not deter the common reader from pursuing that argument, but would rather encourage him to follow it.

Turning once more to the kind of intellectual waters that existed for Shaftesbury at this time, there stands the presence of scepticism of both the social and academic level, which, however different they might be at bottom, superficially may have appeared as a fairly widespread alternative to prevalent ideologies concerning authority and order.

The social dimension of scepticism may be seen as appearing in the Characters of Jean de la Bruyere, which first appeared in 1688.²⁵ It is a work of social criticism which derives much of its effectiveness from a scepticism which is not academic in character. La Bruyere, for example is sceptical as to the professions of courtiers in religion, after the fashion of Horace and Juvenal's satires, sometimes obliquely, sometimes more directly. The societal aspect

25. J. de la Bruyere, Characters, translated with an introduction by Jean Stewart, (Penguin Books, London 1970)

appears through his choice of targets for most of his observations, the focus upon the higher levels of society, and especially upon the society of the town. On beliefs, as opposed to their practical manifestation or concealment, La Bruyere is less certainly sceptical.

La Bruyere had a diverse tradition of thinking upon human nature to draw upon at the end of the seventeenth century in France. Moliere raising farce to comedy, essentially inclines to view human weakness as something that has to be accepted rather than the occasion for indignation. La Fontaine, never permitting the reader to forget for long the beast-like qualities of man, concludes that such pleasures as life offers should be made the most of, while they may. In contrast, Pascal pointed to the misery of the human condition and then asserted the necessity of faith. A more popular writer in society would have been La Rochefoucauld, who promoted the idea of the 'honnête homme', an early counterpart to the English man of breeding in his social acceptability, but who tended to point more to personal morality as distinct from religion, where the English man of breeding was less conscious, less sensitive, on this count. It was with such a background that La Bruyere wrote, trying to steer a course for religion, between the emergent scepticism of Bayle and Fontenelle.²⁶ the lesser 'libertins', and the false devotees and hypocrites, whose exaggerated fervour did religion a disservice.

Shaftesbury read La Bruyere and shows familiarity with the tradition in which the Frenchman had written, that of Theophrastus.²⁷

26. Fontenelle's Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes 1686, was among the books Shaftesbury left with Locke in Rotterdam, 1687.

27. Rand, Second Characters. p 99

It was not a form which Shaftesbury had much favour for, regarding it as akin to portraiture in painting - as one of the lesser forms. On the other hand, the link between this sort of social criticism, and that of Shaftesbury's Characteristics is not usually remarked and is deserving of notice, although there are difficulties in developing it. On the same lines, Shaftesbury shows familiarity with the works of St. Evremond, a more Epicurean contemporary, and therefore less to Shaftesbury's taste, than to some of his contemporaries.

While this may be seen as part of the social aspect of the expression of scepticism, there were also more thorough-going critiques of established views, which tended to emphasise the problem of knowledge rather than that of behaviour. Montaigne set out this kind of scepticism in his Apologie de Raimond Sebond, which treated the epistemological problems posed by sceptical arguments, the social factors that influence judgment, and reached Pyrrhonian conclusions. Montaigne seemed to say that life according to custom and acceptance of authority was the only solution to the difficulties he traced.

As with other forms of scepticism, the undermining was often more forceful than the subsequent conclusion, and this is one aspect that can usefully be kept in mind in considering the Characteristics, and what it was likely to have meant to contemporaries. The scepticism of Montaigne continued to manifest itself in the search for certainty and truth in Gassendi and in Descartes. Subsequently, in Malebranche, who supported Descartes' views, the problem tended to express themselves in epistemological philosophy centred upon the nature of man's thinking about objects, about primary and secondary qualities. Shaftesbury's paper upon the materiality of thought,

suggests some familiarity with this kind of discourse, and his acquaintance with Descartes' work is to be seen not only in the Characteristics but at this time, in the letter to Locke of September 1694, wherein he cites Descartes as an example of a system-builder.

Interestingly the French tradition of scepticism was paralleled by a lesser known English version wherein an attempt was made to distinguish unreasonable and exaggerated claims to doubt from cases of 'reasonable doubt'. This limited theory, expressed by John Wilkins and Joseph Glanvill, led to the expression of the concept of 'reasonable doubt' in jurisprudence. This represented a return to more Academic scepticism, which accepted the principle that all was open to doubt, but claimed that of that all, some claims were more probable than others. In Pyrrhonism, every claim was doubtful and therefore the most rational course was to suspend judgment and thereby acquire peace of mind.

A new thrust had been given to scepticism during this time when Shaftesbury's opinions might be regarded as having been in their formative stages. In a subsequent account of Bayle's life, Desmairieux wrote of the appearance of the challenging Pensees Diverses sur la Comete, in 1682, which Bayle expanded in subsequent editions; of the idea of Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres, a journal for the learned 'and the polite' which appeared from 1684 to 1687; and of the famous Dictionnaire Historique et Critique which appeared

in 1697 and 1702, while Bayle lived.²⁸ Bayle moved from a mildly sceptical position to one which was increasingly Pyrrhonic, although at this time his work was more clearly related to its critical social purpose and less 'specialist' than in the Dictionnaire. Shaftesbury found that he could only agree to follow Bayle so far before regarding scepticism as self-defeating. Here it is sufficient to notice the presence of Bayle and the influence of his writings, as an active source of speculation that was presenting itself to Shaftesbury for consideration.²⁹

Scepticism of various expressions constituted an important element in the intellectual milieu in which Shaftesbury formed his opinions, and through the medium of Bayle's works continued to have an important part to play, after Shaftesbury had resolved to address such intellectual and scholarly difficulties in a public as well as a personal capacity in the next decade.

In addition to Platonism as expressed by the Cambridge men, and the varieties of contemporary scepticism, there was the materialist tradition of Hobbes. Shaftesbury later viewed this as being

28. Pierre Desmaizeaux, Preface to the English Translation of Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary second edition 1734-8. The first English translation had appeared in 1710. Desmaizeaux also gives an account of Shaftesbury's interest in Bayle's life.
29. Hazard, op cit; passim. Scepticism at this time does appear more aggressive and less conservative than may have been the case earlier in the 17th century, this earlier background is traced in Louis I Bredvold, op. cit. Chapter Two. Allowing for the impulse of Bayle and Fontenelle among others, there is still a nice contrast between Bredvold's account from the side of the Tory, Dryden, and the account from the view of the Whig, Shaftesbury.

derived from Democritus and Epicurus, and he was to think of it not merely in terms of mechanism and movement, that is in dynamic terms, but in terms of its being the selfish philosophy, emphasising the individual rather than the public good, and also as being based upon the idea of the ruling of the universe according to chance rather than divine intent. Shaftesbury adopted a position that was to see him opposed to this way of thinking, and to anyone who promoted it. In part this was the result of studies, a similar theme running through the works of the Platonists, and in particular of Cudworth's Intellectual System, and in part it was the result of his preference for a philosophy which made its appeal to the nobler instincts of man.

In the social world, the scepticism of La Bruyere, found its complement in a form of wordly cynicism, and epicureanism. As epicureanism, it may be seen in the retreat from the public world and in the pursuit of private pleasures. Often enough, the public figures of which we know may well have been pushed into retirement, rather than to have engaged in such on a voluntary basis. Often this meant professing a stoical attitude and coupling it with an epicurean practice. Sir William Temple's retirement at Moor Park, St. Evremont's retirement in England, have been cited as examples of this kind of aristocratic morality.³⁰

30. Hazard op. cit. p 328: It is possible that Shaftesbury himself briefly envisaged this sort of retreat from the active life of serving the public. If so, this would have been between his retirement from the Commons in 1698 and his return to the Lords in 1700. The former date is rather flexible, in that it is the date of the closing of the Parliament and he himself may have withdrawn earlier.

There is little evidence to suggest that this tradition and philosophy, was considered by Shaftesbury in a scholarly way. There is the supposition, which seems reasonable, that anyone who was familiar with Cudworth's Intellectual System, would be able to identify with some facility the 'atheists' that Cudworth had marked down. The Preface to Whichcote's sermons evidences an awareness of the part of Hobbes in this sort of thinking. There is, however, little rigorous evaluation of the materialists' views.³¹

Locke now reappears in a capacity of philosopher rather than mentor (the roles are of course, to some extent separated artificially in this account). As philosopher, Locke was only beginning to emerge as a figure of significance in this period, and Shaftesbury's references as late as 1704, may be seen as insufficiently appreciative of the quality of Locke's thought, as opposed to its diversity.³² Locke had at this time completed early versions of most of his works, but the only case where Shaftesbury seems to have played a part, is the Essay Concerning Human Understanding

31. One philosophical distinction that might have been made clear by an analysis, was that between those who believed that having once set the world in motion, God was hidden, and played no further part, all change being regulated by laws of nature which were the expression of his will, (a kind of deism), and those others who maintained that creation was fortuitous and accidental, a school which inclined more towards atheism. 'Epicureans' inclined toward the former view, of a God who no longer participated in the affairs of the world.
32. Shaftesbury to Jean Le Clerc, February 1705. Notes and Queries, Vol. III. 8th February 1851.

(1690), although there may have been oblique references to Shaftesbury, or his brothers and sisters, in Education (1693).

Shaftesbury's difference with Locke centred upon the letter's rejection of the doctrine of innate ideas. The background to this question has been investigated in such a way as to demonstrate that the context of Locke's attack on the doctrine is much richer than has been thought, and consequently, the judgment upon a philosopher who chooses to differ with Locke, upon that philosopher's capacity as scholar as well as thinker, must be modified accordingly.³³ However, that is not our main concern here. The question that confronts us, is that of evaluating the significance of Locke, seen in the tradition of Hobbes and materialism, vis a vis the formation of Shaftesbury's philosophical opinions.

The evidence of the Locke-Shaftesbury correspondence is not fruitful in this respect, although Shaftesbury complimented Locke directly and to their friend Stringer, on the Essay which, he said had provided a better account of the functioning of the mind than any anatomist's. Against this must be laid the fact that Shaftesbury does not seem to have appreciated this kind of philosophy, which was justified insofar as it added to the stock of knowledge. Shaftesbury sought a moral philosophy whose efficacy lay in improved morality, and no amount of additional knowledge would, he thought, serve his purpose. This is the interpretation that is here placed

33. John Yolton: John Locke and the Way of Ideas (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1956) Ch. V.

Contrast Locke's views on innate dispositions in 'Education' (1693).

upon the letter of September 1694.

Shaftesbury then was exposed to such intellectual and social thought patterns. There were also others which might not have been backed by developed philosophies. Among these we may count the prevalent mystical and enthusiastic interests, and the traditional doctrines associated with legal and ecclesiastical establishment, whose authority was derived as much from custom and tradition as from reasoned argument. It would not be possible to trace all these nor to evaluate their impact on Shaftesbury as an individual. The three substantial influences in his formative years have been suggested. There were reasons why each should in turn be found lacking in respect of Shaftesbury's objective, namely that the philosophy he espoused should provide a credible ethic for himself and others. If contemporary views were unable to assist, he was confronted with the choice of not pursuing his objective through philosophy, or of pursuing it through philosophy^{so} but after a different manner. In the event, he chose to do both these things, abandoning for a time his philosophical interests, and pursuing a public career in the world of politics. Thereafter he resumed his philosophical interests, and following a course that he had hinted at, in his correspondence with Locke, he found among the ancients, congenial authors, with the help of whose works he could practice philosophy. Subsequently, his task was to present such a philosophy in a manner acceptable to his contemporaries, with such modifications as would be necessary. Before turning to a consideration of his public career, which shows analogous elements to this account of his failure to find suitable philosophical accomodation,

an intellectual haven among his contemporaries, it may be helpful to rehearse the aspects of the Platonist, Sceptic, and Materialist traditions with which Shaftesbury had problems.

Shaftesbury's later conclusions, his views as expressed in the Characteristics, lead to the conclusion that he was most at home with the ideas and philosophy of the Cambridge Platonists, but not with the means by which their views had been expressed, whether sermon or 'encyclopaedic chronicle'. Moreover, it may be noted that the mantle of the Cambridge men had passed to the established Church, where they formed the Latitudinarian minority which was stronger on preaching than it was in philosophy.

The sceptical aspect is also shadowed. Shaftesbury in personal terms, may have found the prospect of permanent doubt untenable. Moreover, the varieties of scepticism contributed a wider, more socially important factor. Shaftesbury was later able to write of Bayle in terms which left little room for doubt as to his real appreciation of Bayle's worth as an individual and as^a philosopher. These views did not however, extend to all sceptics. On balance, Shaftesbury thought that it was better to encourage scepticism, as a bulwark against enthusiasm and superstition, and then to promote his own views for those capable of making the further transition from doubt to certainty. Thus, the Characteristics, not infrequently justifies scepticism as an attitude of mind.

As for the Epicurean-Hobbesian tradition, which Shaftesbury detected as being so very much alive among his contemporaries, his opposition thereto remained. In personal terms he seems to have viewed the prospect of a world dominated by chance, and irrational

change, as peculiarly abhorrent, and to have associated this with atomist views of the universe and with atheism. In practical terms, the display of self-interest which was not enlightened, the pursuit of pleasures and appetities without reason or regulation, apparent to Shaftesbury in his contemporaries, evidenced by inconstancy of purpose, and faithlessness, which was associated with Hobbesian teaching presented a very real target for Shaftesbury to attack.

At the outset of this chapter, it was remarked that Shaftesbury's progress towards philosophy in a scholarly capacity was gradual. In fact, it appears to have become increasingly serious after 1698, particularly when he was able to leave the country to reside in a private way in Holland. This was not always the case, and he also conducted a political life between the years 1695 and 1702 at the centre in Parliament, and locally thereafter, which has traditionally been set too easily to one side. If it is integrated into an account of his life and intellectual make-up, before the writing of the Characteristics, it renders more understandable certain areas of that work, in which Shaftesbury writes at length of matters which would not form the central concern of professional and single-minded philosophers. The other side of Shaftesbury's life, the public life as it were, serves the function of setting off the philosophical aspect, and of providing a meaningful context against which to view Shaftesbury's intention in writing the Characteristics, and the means by which he chose to express himself.

CHAPTER THREE

SHAFTESBURY AND THE IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL WORLD.

Shaftesbury entered the political world with a heightened moral consciousness. This might be thought to have been not altogether wise, even allowing Shaftesbury's disclaimers as to his own estimate of his probable effectiveness. The political world of post-Revolutionary England was fierce, with accusations of corruption serving to heighten party animosities. Moreover, the parties and the principles on which they were based were themselves in a condition of uncertainty and flux, in which charges of betrayal and treachery were levelled at former allies and friends, with as great a frequency as those friendships and alliances were broken or reformed. The intention here is to trace out some of those political views which Shaftesbury encountered, and some of the difficulties that they presented to him. Instead of a philosophical Odyssey, we have now a political Odyssey. Politics, it may be remembered, was always for Shaftesbury the calling which had priority over all others insofar as it meant serving the "public". The writer was a secondary character, whose role was to assist the pilot of the ship of state. In terms of the main theme of this study, the political background shown here, predominately on the ideological plane, will help to delineate the social background in which Shaftesbury acted and wrote, and which he sought to influence in the Characteristics.

Two preliminaries will help to mark the break from the preceding concern with matters of intellect. England was at war nearly all

of Shaftesbury's adult life, with a brief uneasy peace from 1697-1702. True, it was not total war in a modern sense, but the cumulative impact which it wrought upon society and opinions was almost as great. Certainly, for political society, that relatively narrow band of the social strata which could be regarded as politically active, the war and its impact was of great significance.

This politically active part of society cannot easily be defined but is probably embraced by the royal family, the hereditary peerage, the country gentlemen and wealthy merchants, and to a lesser degree the more affluent among the yeomen, who^{could} afford to be independent of their superior, the squirearchical country gentleman. The merchants were aligned with the landowners, but not of them, and similarly, the ecclesiastical hierarchy paralleled, rather than merged into, the landowning structure. The political world in an active sense was then limited. Shaftesbury's earliest known views on politics are much as might be expected of the grandson of the leader of the Exclusion Crisis Whigs. He heartily endorsed the Glorious Revolution, viewing it as a relief from the dual threat of the imposition of Roman Catholicism, 'Popery', and from that of French domination. This latter threat, which still existed, of course, was more characteristic of Shaftesbury's own perception of what the Revolution of 1688 was about, than the more generally shared views about the defence of the Protestant interest.¹

1. Supra, Chapter one.

Following the Revolution, there was a period of resettlement and experimentation at the centre, which, described in brief here, may set the background of Shaftesbury's appearance before the public.

The vagaries of William's ministries before 1694 have caused problems for political historians.² The Convention Parliament found the Whig Party dominant over the Tory Party in 1689-90, but the next three years were marked by the dominance in Parliament of Cairnmarthen (Earl of Danby of earlier times) and the Tories. It was not until 1694 that from a minority position in a mixed ministry, Russell and Somers began to lead the Whigs back to the political leadership and dominance that they had lost nearly five years earlier. Confusing times indeed, when questions were put as to what were the Whigs doing in Tory ministries and what was the role of the Court influence offering inducements in the form of bribes or offices to opponents of ministerial plans? The confusion was not confined to matters of ministries and office holding, but found a further extension in the problems of ideology and political programme that the Revolution had exposed.

The differences between the Whig and Tory parties on the ideological plane can be traced back to the Exclusion Crisis. Insofar as they represented attitudes of mind, they may be said to have had previous expression in the earlier Court/Country distinctions.

2. E.L. Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', in Britain After The Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714 ed. G. Holmes, (London: Macmillan, 1969) Chapter 5. On the debate on the nature of the Revolution and the subsequent political structure, Henry Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics'. Chapter 4.

The latter were not without an active following during the 1690's although the Whig /Tory divisions were predominant.

The issues upon which Whig and Tory divided, the questions of principle that assume the status of political philosophy were political obligation, sovereignty, and the relationship of the Church and the state. Political obligation found itself expressed as an issue, in that the question of the right of resistance had been raised and examined at the time of the Exclusion Crisis and subsequently at the Revolution. The Whigs had argued for the right of the people to resist the will of the King in extreme instances. Unsuccessful at the time of the Exclusion Crisis, the Revolution of 1688 demonstrated the theoretical argument, but also brought with it an accompanying set of problems that the Whigs sought to avoid, and which were associated with the question of when resistance was justified. Naturally the post-Revolution Whigs, seeking backing for a King in many respects acceptable, had no wish to affirm the rights of resistance to such a King. Instead they were often concerned to promote oaths of allegiance, which if conceived so as to isolate their political enemies, also represented repeated declarations of loyalty to the monarchy, de jure as well as de facto. The Tories were in a different case, for they were ideologically associated with non-resistance to the authority of the monarchy. Yet among their leaders was Carmarthen who, as Danby, had signed the invitation to William. Moreover, once the shock of the Revolution had subsided the Tories still found that they were not always inclined to view the affairs of the nation in the same way as the King. Non-

resistance for a group who had clearly condoned resistance signified a need to change the expression of the ideology, if not the basic principle.

Sovereignty was perhaps, in retrospect, the root of many of the problems. Sovereignty is concerned with the question of where ultimate power lies, and the questions that were put forward asked if it lay with the King, or whether it lay in that useful but uncertain idea of the 'King in Parliament'. The Tories had before the Revolution, and before James' activities discouraged them, been anxious to assert the Royal Prerogative as a corollary of the ideas of divine right and passive obedience. In William's reign they were anxious to curtail the King's activities. Subsequently, after the accession of Anne, the Tories resumed their earlier position, affirming the rights of the prerogative. The Whigs faced similar difficulties, with William they were anxious to promote a royal authority that coincided with their interests, despite an earlier insistence upon the rights of the people in Parliament. During these years there was almost as much call for a descriptive, as well as a prescriptive theory of political sovereignty, as the demands of war and regular parliamentary sessions, exposed new areas of uncertainty and change.

The third aspect of the ideological confusion that had been generated by the success of the Revolution lay upon the vexed question of the relationship between Church and State. Undoubtedly, increasing secularisation makes the significance of this question to contemporaries much harder for the historian to grasp. Yet it was very important outside of England, where in the armed leagues and alliances Catholic and Protestant distinctions some-

times seemed to weigh as heavy as more secular conceptions of the national interest. The wars of the period, especially after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and the persecution of French Protestants, certainly assumed the hue of a religious conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism, in which the latter was conceived to be under attack. More specifically, Shaftesbury himself viewed the role of William as the defender of Protestantism, from what^{as} we have seen, Shaftesbury regarded as the 'horriddest of all religions'.

18th.

'Church in danger' was a rallying cry in the eighteenth century from Sacheverell rioting to Gordon rioting. To this time, the Tories had promoted the idea that obedience to the King was to be accompanied by obedience to the established Church of England. Yet after the Revolution the accommodation reached among the politicians was not so easily reached in the Church. The Tories had their embarrassments, the Jacobites and the non-Jurors. Moreover, within the established Church, those achieving ecclesiastical preferment after the Revolution were not always thought of as being the best supporters of the Tories. The Whigs had argued on behalf of toleration a view they endorsed, but were often unable to implement. Again what caused as much difficulty here as any ideological difference was the absence of knowledge. The Revolution led to a rethinking of their position by the established Churchmen, but subsequent events, the Toleration Act, the lapsing of the Licensing Act, and the growth of a voluntarist programme tended to bring forward issues which were not so clearly political in

character.³

The impact of the Revolution and the war that followed so closely, was not merely to bring about shifts in the ideological character of the two main parties, for there were other elements which polemic and assiduous pamphleteering served to highlight, distort, and generally to heighten differences rather than to allow them to settle themselves.

In this way the Whigs became tainted with associations of their being in favour of republicanism, of being 'Commonwealthmen', and also of their being opposed to revealed, that is scripturally-based, religion. The Tories were depicted as Jacobites, waiting or plotting, to bring back James. In this way the interests of the parties can be defined in another way, the Tories identifying themselves with the interest of the Church of England against the enemies that surrounded it, and the Whigs trying to identify themselves with the 'Protestant Succession' and in time, with the House of Hanover.

The war with France in William's reign and the one that nearly encompassed the reign of Anne formed another source for differences of opinion. The question was not whether these wars should be fought, for they were felt by many to be unavoidable, but how they should be fought. The Whigs became associated with William's

3. This account may be read in the light of the much fuller account of the issues that divided the political world at the time of Anne, in G. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, (London: Macmillan, 1967), Chapter Two.

policy of fighting on land and at sea, on behalf of the allies. The Tories, asserting only the need to defend Britain and its trade laid the emphasis upon the naval side of strategy and were against the idea of an armed force upon the continent. This led naturally to suspicions that the Tories were pro-French, suspicions corroborated by their frequently voiced distrust of the Dutch, whom they felt to be furthering their own interests at the expense of the English efforts. The Whigs in turn became associated with the need to fight on the continent, to back their Dutch allies, and in Anne's reign with the war in Spain.

During William's reign, the distinction between Whig and Tory was felt to be for the most part fitting to the distinction between the two great parties. In addition, however, such was the uncertainty that men had recourse to the older labels of Court and Country. In some letters Shaftesbury is very concerned to show himself in the tradition of the last, and it is helpful to recall that the Whig/Tory distinction often has priority in practical terms, the Country tradition featuring in more specific contexts, which were episodic in character.

The principles of the Whigs then, despite many deviations and uncertainties which the Revolution and the practice of politics brought about, were that ultimately, power lay in the hands of the people who were governed by their consent through the will of the King acting in accord with Parliament. The philosophy associated with this was 'contract' theory which posited a real or hypothetical contract between the people for the purpose of their mutual security and advantage. The people having given

their consent to be governed, they retained the right to resist their King if he was adjudged to have forfeited that consent.

In the area of religion, the Whigs argued on behalf of toleration, although the removal of James also represented the removal of the immediate threat of the imposition of Roman Catholicism. Unable or unwilling, for other political considerations to change the law after the passage of the Toleration Act, the Whigs could permit a climate in which dissent from Anglican views, while not encouraged, was permitted to exist without molestation.

The Tories were ideologically petrified by the Revolution, since much of their coherence in ideological terms had derived from the principles of the divine right of Kings, (in whom ultimate sovereignty lay) and the idea of non-resistance, both of which had been breached. The source of their political strength, however, lay in the conjunction of the interests of the Church of England, and those of the supporters of monarchical authority, and although eroded and shaken, this political alliance was not destroyed.

Against this background, the Country Party lived an uneasy and tenuous existence. The distinction between William's and Anne's reign is marked here, in that in the former there was a group which could be called the 'Country Party', whereas by the time Anne was settled upon the throne, the terminology of 'Country members' becomes more appropriate.

'The view that office tainted and that power corrupted may, therefore, have been an affectation with some; but there were also those, (and they were not negligible

in numbers) with whom it was a real conviction: those for whom the health of the body politic demanded that men of independent fortune in the Commons, and especially those who were free from any obligations to any of the big party chieftains, should preserve their capacity to act as a permanent, purifying criticising force in politics... Such men (as Thomas Pitt in 1705) were the true heirs of the "Country" tradition of Charles II's reign, as well as inheriting the more recent legacy of anti-prerogative, anti-ministerial feeling which had been current at Westminster in the nineties; and their activities in the Parliaments of 1702-14 introduced into the politics of the day a stratum of political ideas which in one way or another ran horizontally across the normal vertical lines which divided the Whig and Tory parties and the principles for which they stood'. 4.

The Country tradition was as much an attitude of mind towards politics, as it was a political credo. For many country members, their principle consisted in evaluating all ministerial propositions in the balance of their interests, and those of 'the people'. They viewed themselves, not as part of an initiating executive, but as a check upon the initiatives taken or proposed by the ministers of the crown. In this respect they were active only in their opposition to ministries. For some of these members, there lay to hand a rationale which would justify their activity. This was derived from classical models, particularly Polybius, in which the separation of powers between executive, legislative and to a lesser degree, the judicature, was discussed. The country members could therefore make a virtue out of declining office.

4. G.Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, Chapter Four p 120. Since in theory the monarch made no difference to the Country principles, they viewed themselves as guardians of the people, the disappearance of the Country party qua party, should not be seen as other than accidentally related to the change from William to Anne, but rather to different circumstances.

However, during periods of war, when meetings of Parliament were frequent, the Country Party did not prosper.

This was because, in essence, it simply faced the wrong way. Historically it belonged to a period when Parliament wished to exercise the yea or nay, but had not envisaged a participative role. Country members wanted 'less government! Circumstances demanded more government particularly in respect of arranging to pay for the war.

The more sophisticated elements of the country party, those who had worked this attitude of mind into something that resembled, albeit somewhat negative^{ly}, a party programme found expression briefly in William's reign. The issues at which they tried to coalesce their associates were characteristically those in which opposition to the will of, or power of, the Crown were involved. They attempted a series of Place Bills, designed to procure the limitation of the number of members of the Commons who held office under the Crown. These men they saw to be paid by the Crown, and consequently subject to the influence of the Crown. They were active in the investigation of the grants of land made by William to his favourites or favoured servant. In this sense, they can be seen as defending their own interests, since it was proposed to use the rentals from the lands to assist payments toward the war, thereby alleviating the burden upon the English landowner. A strong combination of moral principle - objection to the extending of the influence of the crown - and self-interest, - the less the taxes and excises, the less they paid - worked to unite the Country members. Less self-interested perhaps was the

profession of the Country member that his concern was with 'good housekeeping' in government, although here also the way in which the expenditure of taxes took place was very much close to the heart of the man who had to pay those taxes. A recurrent theme in both reigns was the call for inquiries into allegations of corruption and speculation. These were sometimes animated by party passion of the Whig/Tory variety, although Harley in the late 1690s was capable of turning genuine concern into a political attack. In this light, the attacks upon Ranelagh, on Halifax and Orford may be viewed, as may the activities of the Commission of Public Accounts, whose appeal was to the public weal, and whose practice was partisan. There were two other concerns which the Country gentlemen voiced from time to time. One was that the conduct of elections should be improved to prevent corruption at the poll, and here they were generally unsuccessful. The second was their objection to conscription and the conduct of recruiting, in which they met with some success in that ministers subsequently moderated their methods after such complaints.

Insofar as ideas and principles were an important part of politics during Shaftesbury's adult life, the two dominant parties, the Whigs and the Tories, acted as mouthpieces for rival political philosophies, with Country sentiment co-existing uncertainly with party thinking. There was however a fourth group, the Court interest, which acted as a balance upon the activities of the two parties, and as an antithesis to the Country sentiment. Often the 'Courtiers' were viewed as paid office holders, as 'lobby-fodder'. This overlooks the important role that they performed,

that of enabling ministries under pressure to function at all. Undoubtedly, some were corrupt and others determined to hold on to their place and pension at all cost, other Court members however, were part of a different tradition. This tradition, which Shaftesbury occasionally referred to, envisaged not ministries, but 'managers'. Under this view the role of the politician was to manage the affairs and wishes of the monarch through the parliament. In an age such as this was, when the reality of party conflict was seen as a matter of regret, there was the shadow of this older image of politics, of managers who were both politicians and administrators, and who faced the independent country members, whose task was in their turn to approve or deny the proposals put forward by the managers of the King's affairs. In this respect the modified Toryism of Marlborough and Godolphin can be understood. The Earl of Sunderland, father of the Junto Whig, Charles Spencer epitomised such a viewpoint in asking if it mattered who served the King, so long as the King was served.⁵

Schematically then, the appearance of politics at this time can be represented in the following way:

Professed Principles

- a) Limited Monarchy
- b) Hanoverian Succession
- c) Religious Toleration
- d) Acceptance of the Financial Revolution
- e) Acceptance of Land War
- f) Tolerant of Foreigners

5. Keith Feiling, A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714 (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1924 reprinted 1970), p. 283

Court WingWHIGSCountry Wing

Opposed to

agree on need
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and mismanagementCourt WingTORIESCountry Wing

- a) Assert Royal Prerogative and Non-Resistance
- b) Divided on the Succession
- c) Staunch supporters of Anglican Church
- d) Support claims of the Landed Interest
- e) Opposed to Land War, support Naval Strategy
- f) Xenophobic, but especially averse to Dutch.

It would be incorrect to suppose that the two major parties were homogeneous, varying only in the degree of support that they put behind their respective political principles. On the contrary, although there has been divergence of opinion as to the nature of the structure of politics in post-Revolutionary England, the emergence of a revised viewpoint indicated that both major parties can be segmented. Here, an outline of such a segmentation will be drawn in order to facilitate the identification of Shaftesbury's political friends and enemies, in the absence of which much of the critical purpose that is to be found in the Characteristics would appear to be pointless shadow boxing.

The Whig party after the Revolution went through a period of reappraisal. The Dissolution of 1690 disabused many of the impression that they had reached the promised land of effective political power. In the next decade many of the older leaders, especially those associated with the Country tradition, and Whiggism of the Exclusion Crisis, were unable to provide the leadership required by new circumstances and younger associated. Some of the

leaders, like the first Earl of Shaftesbury, Lords Essex^{and} Russell and Algernon Sidney had been defeated before the Revolution, so that there was something of a power vacuum at the top. The appearance in 1694 of a more youthful group of Whigs, headed by Lord John Somers, and Admiral Edward Russell, marked the appearance of a Whig revival, and the further decline of older influences. In supporting the King's claim and enabling him to have the necessary funds with which to fight the Augsburg War to 1697, the Junto and Robert Spencer, 2nd Earl of Sunderland, achieved political success. It was not without its price, and Somers and Orford (Edward Russell) with their associates, Thomas Wharton, and Charles Montagu (later Lord Halifax) were subject to attacks from the Country Wing of their own party, and from the Tory Opposition. After their fall from power in 1698 because of their inability to serve both King and people during the peace, the attacks of their enemies indicated some advantage in their holding together as a group, more than was customary among leading politicians and men of ambition as individuals, in these years. Thereafter, the Junto, to whom in the reign of Anne the name of Charles Spencer, Third Earl of Sunderland, was added, formed the largest and most solid phalanx in the Whig party.

The objections to the Junto that had come from the Country wing of the party and which made possible their fall from office in 1698 had been based upon apparent Junto willingness to serve the King against the interest of the country gentlemen. Although such office-holding had been necessary during time of war it was argued, the prosecution of the King's business coupled

with the apparent zeal with which some members of the Junto had sought offices under the Crown, had led after the Treaty of Ryswick (1697) to severe censure and to the estangement of the Junto from their necessary support. It was not until the last year of William's reign, that support for the Junto reaffirmed itself as the threat of war, and the prospect of a Tory ministry under Anne, prompted country members of the Whig party to consider matters afresh.

In contrast, the Tory party must have considered the Revolution wellweathered in 1690. Some of their leaders had, for a time, been ministers under James II, and could have expected proscription by the apparently victorious Whigs, but the Sacheverell clause had failed to become law, the inexperience of Whig leadership and the desire for vengeance had resulted in a reaction, election, and the triumph in outward appearance of the stalwart supporter of Church and State, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, now Marquis of Carmarthen. The recovery was not maintained, the Tories were unable to manage the King's affairs, Danby was eclipsed by rumours of corruption, and the balance of power shifted to the emergent Whig leaders.

Yet from this time, Robert Harley, by descent a Country Whig, began to form an association with the Country interests of the Tory party, with interests that is, that were prepared to play down the association with the prosecuting and intolerant Church party which constituted a mainstay and burden upon the Tory party. Harley's manoeuvres led to the migration of some Country Whigs to the 'New Country' party and his success in the Commons after 1698

in promoting the interests of the Country membership, led to the reappearance at ministerial level of Tory leadership.

The accession of Anne brought about changes in ideology and practice. The succession became once more, a live issue, which the Tories had been able to avoid facing up to, whilst the prospect of Anne's succession had confronted them. War once again was to the forefront, and with it the vexed question as to how it should be fought, and what were its objectives. Tory success at the polls brought danger to the ministry. Anne had sought to rule through Godolphin, Marlborough and Harley. An early accommodation with the High Church group headed by Rochester and Nottingham resulted in their dismissal. The ministry, without the support of the Church following, and no longer having so easy a command over what had been grass roots Tory support, the Tory Country interest, gradually came to the realisation that a compromise had to be reached. Harley was dropped as Marlborough and Godolphin were pushed toward accommodation with the Junto. The elections of 1705 and 1708 traced the shifting pattern as Whig influence grew. Yet the Whigs were required to support the war effort, and as the efforts to secure a satisfactory peace failed, they too lost much popular support. In 1710, Harley struck back at his former colleagues Godolphin and Marlborough, and brought the Tories back to power. Towards the end of his life, Shaftesbury's concern was with the nature of the peace that could be made and he feared a treacherous peace, which would fail to achieve the objects for which the war had been fought. By that time, he was an interested observer, no longer active, but this had not always

been the case.

How can Shaftesbury's views and activities be fitted against such a mutable background? Here it will be argued that Shaftesbury's participation and interest in politics are somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, after a period of intense commitment, he chose to withdraw from active involvement. On the other hand, despite discomfort that he felt as a result of the turbulence in the political world, in the lesser capacity of observer and sometime guide, Shaftesbury preserved an interest in the political world and endeavoured to make a contribution throughout his life.

A preliminary qualification may be made and that is that Shaftesbury's correspondence, especially that to Furley in Rotterdam and to John Molesworth in Italy, was conducted with a very reasonable awareness of the probability of its being intercepted and opened by agents of government. Shaftesbury did not always express himself fully, or adjusted the content of his letters so as to make them appear innocuous. Although this sometimes appears as heightened sensibility concerning the importance of his own views, this would probably be unfair. His contemporaries were not averse to using codes or ciphers if they felt that they were warranted. This leads also to the remark that Shaftesbury was frequently conscious of the person to whom he was writing, and the purpose for which he was writing, factors which need to be taken into account before evaluating the content of his correspondence, and assessing the degree to which it reflects his true views.

As the potential leader of a Whig family, Shaftesbury inherited a political tradition and political connections. Initially these

would have been based upon his grandfather's associates. John Locke is the best known of these associates, although little is known of the political affinities between Locke and the third Earl. In addition, there were Thomas Stringer, a member of the first Earl's 'family' with whom Shaftesbury stayed during the early 1690's; Lord Rutland, who stood in the relation of father-in-law, who had backed the Revolution, but inclined to the Tories; the grandmother 'mournful' (because of her bereavement in 1683) Margaret Shaftesbury who maintained a separate household from the second Earl; the Earl of Monmouth, later Peterborough, and his son John Mordaunt with whom Shaftesbury seems to have formed an early association; and Lady Russell, widow of the Whig 'martyr'. There were others, local connections in particular, whose identity and significance in this context cannot clearly be ascertained.

However, the legacy of the first Earl here did not consist solely of persons who had known him, but of the political and religious traditions which he represented. The first Earl however has always had the reputation of changing his beliefs to suit the occasion, and certainly he does not appear to have left any testament politique to guide the third Earl. It seems probable that he evaluated matters in terms of political practicability, but that going beyond this, his own religious views required less insistence upon doctrine and dogma than did those of some of his contemporaries. He supported the need for an established Church, with toleration for dissent and dissenters' rights to worship as they pleased. The established Church was, therefore, justified not in terms of its being the true Church, nor of its being the

best Church, but probably in terms of its function as a means of social control. The first Earl's attitude to Catholicism was more restricted. Here there was the additional question of to whom the Catholic owed ultimate allegiance, in which Roman Catholics could be seen to threaten the political as well as the social order. The early vehemence of the third Earl, whilst on the Grand Tour, against priests and Jesuits has been remarked, as has the link between the threat to religion, i.e. Protestantism, and the threat of France to the national interest. The third Earl may be said to have inherited some of this prejudice from his grandfather or the ideas that were passed from him.

Secondly, the first Earl had given some thought to the question of where sovereignty lay in the constitution. He viewed it, after the Whig manner described above, as being in the 'people' but as being exercised through the major landowners. The major landowners included the King as the largest, but also the aristocracy. The first Earl would therefore, have opposed James's claims to rule by virtue of Divine Right, opinions promulgated by the appearance of Robert Filmer's Patriarcha, and attacked by Locke in the Two Treatises of Government.⁶ The first Earl was not a democrat, but had defended the privileges of the Lords against the Commons on occasion. His view saw the function of the aristocracy as being to prevent absolutism on the one hand, and to avoid 'tumb-

6. Robert Filmer, Patriarcha ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949) pp 33-34. John Locke, Two Treatises of Government ed. Peter Laslett, (London: Cambridge University Press: Mentor Paperbacks, 1965) pp 59-79

ling into a democratical republic' on the other.⁷

Thirdly, in his attitude toward foreign affairs, the first Earl appears to have been pragmatic. Unlike his grandson, the first Earl was not cosmopolitan by education or taste, and his attitude toward the Dutch or French seems to have been based upon the political facts of the particular situation. The third Earl later attempted to pass off his grandfather's famous speech attacking the Dutch, arguing that it was no more than his grandfather's duty to express the King's wishes. The refuge afforded by Holland to the first Earl, to Locke and to the third Earl, make this reasoning understandable.

These were the main elements that may be said to have derived from the career of the first Earl, and they can hardly be said to constitute more than the rudiments of a political code of practice. However, toleration, albeit limited, and limited monarchy may be seen as being sentiments that were associated with the Whigs.

Thomas Stringer was the first Earl's man of affairs. After the first Earl's flight to Holland, he had been charged with seditious libel, clearly because of the Shaftesbury association. He was also acquainted with the family life of the Ashley Coopers to a greater degree than Locke, who had occasion to leave the country before and after the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81. His letters to the third Earl were usually concerned with family affairs, but he did not feel inhibited from addressing the grandson of 'one of the greatest

7. K.H.D.Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1968) Chapter XXXI, and passim.

and wisest as well as the best of men', on other matters:

'...It is impossible for me to believe that a person of such early (ripeness) and worthy principles who hath already got his hand to the plow... should now turn back or (sink) too low in despair, as wholly to depart his duty unto it... What if we live in an age where vice and corruption doth abound?'. 8

Shaftesbury had stayed with the Stringer household, before entering Parliament in 1695, as the correspondence with Locke shows.

Stringer can then lay claim to having been an influence upon Shaftesbury's behaviour, and also upon his decision to take up an active political life after 1699.

The part played by the widow of the first Earl is less easily ascertained. After the death of his grandfather Shaftesbury had passed some time with his grandmother as a child. She acted in the proposal to marry the young Lord Ashley to a daughter of Lady Russell, although nothing came of this suggestion. Yet, it is difficult not to see the political aspect of this proposal, in a link between the Russells and Shaftesburys. The dowager Countess of Shaftesbury was also able to ensure that her grandson was acquainted with the Spencer family with whom she was connected.⁹

On the maternal side, the connection with the Earl of Rutland seems to have been conducted formally. Despite their seven children, there was a lack of parental harmony in the mid-1690s, which may have caused Shaftesbury's mother to retire for a time to her family home at Belvoir Castle. In 1690, Carmarthen corres-

8. PRO 30/24/44/77/. Stringer to Lord Ashley, 5 May 1699.

9. PRO 30/24/19/14. Dowager Countess of Shaftesbury to Dorothy, Countess of Shaftesbury, 8 May 1686.

ponded with the Earl of Rutland suggesting political affinity inclining to the Tories.¹⁰

The significance of these family and traditional relationships lies in the fact that in the pre-political period to 1694 Shaftesbury is unlikely to have remained in a state of political naivety but to have been made very aware of the contribution of his grandfather. Shaftesbury would have been made aware of the duties incumbent upon a successor of ability, to take up the political mantle. Further, such connections represent the possibility of guidance upon Shaftesbury's entrance into the political world. Politics may well have preceded ethics as an 'input' in the formative years.

Shaftesbury entered political life with some diffidence. His letters to Locke in 1694 suggest this was the case. On the other hand, of itself, this evidence cannot substantiate the suggestion that he was genuinely reluctant, for it may have been the expression of polite society, with Shaftesbury disclaiming any pretensions to effectiveness beforehand. Having looked at background and heritage, which serve as a prelude, the main activities and political associations of Shaftesbury himself may now be accounted.

As Lord Ashley he was first elected to the House of Commons in May 1695. He was elected as Member for Poole Borough in Dorsetshire where the family retained some influence. The elect-

10. HMC Rutland MSS, cited in K. Feiling, A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714. pp 278-9

ion was a by-election caused by the death of the incumbent, Sir John Trenchard, who had been Secretary of State to William. Trenchard was of the old Country Whig tradition but had taken office under William, as part of the moves which had led to the ministry of that time being more Whiggish. Shaftesbury, in fact, never sat in that Parliament, for William had prorogued the sitting before Shaftesbury's return was recorded and thereafter the House was dissolved.

On the 4th November he was duly returned at the next General Election at the same borough. This Parliament lasted from 1695 to 1698. Shortly after the dissolution Shaftesbury went to stay in Holland where he remained for about a year, returning upon the news of his father's worsening condition.

The Commons Journals tell us little concerning his activity during this Parliament.¹¹ The sessions at this time lasted for about six months from November to March or April. Shaftesbury's doctor later wrote that the Earl's health had been damaged by his attendance on Committee work, where members were closely closeted in an atmosphere which was often smoke-filled. Narcissus Luttrell recorded that Lord Ashley was called with Lord Hartington, the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, to draw up a Bill to punish John Knight and Charles Duncombe, in February 1698.

Shaftesbury was not a successful public speaker, although a

11. Parliamentary Papers Vol 62. Accounts and Papers (1878) Part I. Compare: Cobbett, Parliamentary History, Vol V., list for second Parliament of William and Mary.

contemporary Abel Boyer, seems to have thought his hesitation contrived. He wrote of the Bill for the Trials for Treason which became law in 1696:

'Tis remarkable that whilst this Bill was still depending in the Lower House, the Lord Shaftesbury, a worthy Offspring of the late Earl of that name, perceiving some opposition was made against it, rose up in order to speak for it, and having begun his Speech, he industriously feign'd to be so surprised that for a while he could not go on: But having recover'd himself, he took occasion from his very surprise, to enforce the Necessity of allowing Council/Prisoners who were to appear before their Judges; since he, who not only was unaccus'd and innocent, but one of their Members, was so dash'd when he was to speak before that august Assembly.' 12.

Shaftesbury later wrote to his friend Cropley of his concern that this Bill should become law. 13

Of itself this would suggest that early in his career Shaftesbury was not aligning with the ministerial Whigs but with the critical Country elements. The acceleration in the expression of Country views which came after the Peace of Ryswick (1697) had not at this time occurred. Shaftesbury argued for the Trials for Treason Bill,

12. Abel Boyer, The History of King William III, (London 1702) Vol III, p 117. Boyer continues that this was an 'Admirable Turn of Ready Wit!, And which shewed that this young Lord inherited his Father's Parts', apparently not knowing of the second Earl of Shaftesbury. The incident is recounted with more detail, perhaps even embellishment, in T.B. Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James II (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885) Vol VIII, pp 106-7.
13. Geoffrey Holmes and W.A. Speck editors The Divided Society, London: Edward Arnold, 1967), p 150. Shaftesbury's concern in the Triennial Bill and the disbanding of the army, may well have been that of the interested spectator, than of the active participator. The Triennial Act became law in December 1694, the main controversy over disbanding after Shaftesbury had left for Holland.

despite ministerial pleas that the time for its introduction should be deferred so that authority would not be weakened and treasonable activity encouraged during a time of war.

Surviving division lists for this Parliament reveal that Lord Ashley was not readily assigned when it came to assessing which way he would vote, for he and the best known of his associates, his brother Maurice also sitting at this time, eluded the attributions of their contemporaries. In part, this was because of the conflict that Shaftesbury experienced between principles and practice. The 'College' group which Laslett has identified as being loosely based upon John Locke, and including Edward Clarke and Walter Yonge, seems to have allied itself with the Ministry - 'predominantly Whig' - over the issue of the King's Board of Trade (as opposed to the Parliamentary Council of Trade) in 1696, and the recoinage. At this time Locke's group seemed content to side with the Ministry, which must have run counter to any sentiment of Country feeling that Shaftesbury supposedly held. A further difficulty would have occurred with the debates on the proposal to attain Sir John Fenwick. On the disappearance of one of the government 'witnesses' against Fenwick, recourse to the process of attainder was made by the Whig ministry so that Fenwick should not escape prosecution. The recent Trials of Treason legislation had required that two witnesses be prepared to swear against the accused. Shaftesbury's position was somewhat invidious in that he had spoken on behalf of the new Law, and was now required to act in such a way as to imply his consent to its evasion - the resort to another process - or on the other hand, he could vote with the

Tories, and press for the release of a man whom he probably regarded as a traitor. Shaftesbury and his brother Maurice seem to have absented themselves from the House at the division.

If these particulars were not enough, Shaftesbury was challenging a Whig ministry, which he did not altogether trust, during a period when the country was at war and any challenge lay open to the charge of undermining morale or worse, and thereby associating with the opposition to the ministry, the Tories. The Tories, Shaftesbury regarded as useful allies or servants, but dangerous masters. After the peace, the gradual disintegration of the Whig ministry began, and the emergence of Harley's New Country Party. Shaftesbury may have welcomed this at first, hoping for a genuinely neutral and independent political grouping. It is improbable, however, that he shared the optimism which saw in the end of the war and the disbanding of the army the prospect of lasting peace. We may surmise therefore that he went to Holland, politically speaking, rather a worried man.

The evidence of Shaftesbury's associates at this time, in the political context, also suggests a certain unevenness. The fourth Earl later wrote of Shaftesbury having tried to establish a group or 'Independent Club', but added that this did not last for very long. Shaftesbury's principle associate, or closest, was probably his brother Maurice, who sat for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.

Maurice Ashley's political career reflects Shaftesbury's activity in politics, and it may be conjectured that Maurice was following the 'advice' of his elder brother. This need not have amounted to following his instructions, however, for Shaftesbury

had attempted in the early 1690s to make his brother and sisters financially independent. Maurice claimed that his service to his country was simply that of stopping a Tory from having a seat, and even allowing for a certain deprecation it would appear that he was not an active parliamentarian. The only exception to this being his supposed pressure for an Abjuration Oath and this is from an uncertain source.¹⁴

Other associates of Shaftesbury were Robert Molesworth, Walter Mayle, Charles Davenant, and Sir Rowland Gwynne. The first and last were on occasion holders of offices under the Crown. Molesworth had lost favour as a result of his antagonising the Danish Court to which he had been sent. Sir Rowland Gwynne, had lost his position in the household because he was unable to substantiate allegations of corruption he had made. He pressed the Association for the defence of the person of the King; after the Assassination plot, using the occasion to try once again to isolate the Whigs' enemies who would be unable to take the oath. Later he took up residence in Hanover, from whence he corresponded with

14. Denis Rubini, Court and Country, 1688-1702 (London: Hart Davis 1967) p 89 fn. Rubini gives attention to the issues on which Court and Country divided, suggesting that towards the end of William's reign, this was the division in politics rather than the Whig/Tory distinction. He identifies Shaftesbury as an extreme 'rabid' Whig and as a Country politician, and confuses Shaftesbury with his brother.

Shaftesbury after 1704.¹⁵

Following the dissolution of 1698 neither Shaftesbury nor his brother Maurice elected to stand for Parliament. It may have been that Shaftesbury was not well and determined to go abroad, even forfeiting his opportunity to sit in the Commons for what could have been three years. It may be that Maurice, seeing that his brother did not intend to stand, decided to follow his example and absent himself from candidature. Very certainly, the election which is traditionally seen as having returned a large number of Country members, and as having been a failure for the Ministerial Whigs, did not benefit from the election of either of these two potential 'Country' candidates. Since the prospect of gains by Country elements could have been anticipated, it may be concluded that for reasons best known to themselves, Shaftesbury and his brother did not choose to participate in the electoral victory, and without being unduly cynical as to the conduct of the political animal, it seems unusual to forgo such an opportunity and the possibility of carrying those measures which form part of the programme.

On his elevation to the peerage, his father dying in November 1699, Shaftesbury did not choose to travel to Westminster immed-

15. On Molesworth, Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth Century Commonwealth Man, (New York: Atheneum, 1968) Ch IV; the claims to associate Shaftesbury with the Commonwealth tradition, it will be observed, are carefully set out, as if Professor Robbins were aware of the insufficiency of the suggestion of direct correspondence between Shaftesbury and Commonwealth ideology or practice. Some of the difficulties arise from the juxtaposition of reasoned argument, ideology and political practice. On Rowland Gwynne, Keith Feiling, op cit., p 319 fn.

ately. It was not too long however, before he did so, for on 19th January 1699/1700 he took the oaths in the Lords as third Earl of Shaftesbury. He attended a few times in the months of February and March but does not appear to have been at all assiduous at this time. Parliament was prorogued in April, and again through the summer until it was dissolved in December. In his brief attendance, Shaftesbury had time to witness the stature that Harley had now gained in the Lower House, and the measures that were taken in the name of the New Country Party. The attack upon the Junto was prosecuted, and upon Somers in particular for his role in backing Captain Kidd, who had sailed to capture pirates only to turn privateer himself.¹⁶ The Irish Land Grants were investigated at length and reported upon in a way that was detrimental to William's favourites, but overlooked any qualifications put in the report by the minority of Whig, members of the Commission. The bill to vest all Crown property in the hands of parliamentary trustees occasioned conflict between the two Houses, especially as it was 'tacked' to a money bill for the raising of the land tax. Lords' amendments were rejected, a constitutional crisis developed, until at last the Lords gave way.

The following summer the King replaced his ministers with Tory politicians. Somers had been replaced in April and the new Tory ministry was installed before the next election was called in December. The cycle had turned since 1695 from bellicose

16. Keith Feiling, *op cit.*, p 336

ministerial Whigs, to pacific ministerial Tories. The death of the Duke of Gloucester, Princess Anne's surviving son, in July 1700, and the acceptance of the Will of Charles of Spain by Louis XIV, despite Partition arrangements, had altered the situation in terms of foreign policy. The choice before Shaftesbury was that of trying to identify a feasible Country Whig line under the leadership of Harley and the Tories, or seeking an accommodation with the displaced Junto and their followers.

The resurgence of the Tory leadership was backed by a critical majority in the Commons of Country and Tory. It also began to be associated with the expression of some High Church principles, which hitherto had remained latent sources of discontent, but which were after this time expressed in the controversies of Convocation.

The penetration of society achieved by the established Church was considerable. It is difficult to conceive the social purpose behind Shaftesbury's critical attack upon the established religion without some appreciation of the social dimension of this aspect of English society in the early 18th century. However, it was particularly from this time forward that the Church and its supporters became associated with a more aggressive policy towards the Toleration of Dissenters, and of Dissenting practices such as Occasional Conformity and Dissenting education. Closely allied to this was a strenuous defence of the Established Church, by virtue of its supposed support of authority, and of the Universities which acted as training colleges for the Anglican Clergy.

of the future.¹⁷

Insofar as politics were concerned, the reign of William had to this time been marked by the defection of the non-Jurors, but had otherwise been a period of reassessment. A policy change in 1694 had meant that ecclesiastical preferment tended to favour those whose opinions were aligned to the Whigs. Previously, Queen Mary and the Tory Lord Nottingham had been consulted in the making of appointments. Tension's appointment to Canterbury, rather than that of Stillingfleet, marked this change. The Clergy then began to appeal to the sovereign to summon Convocation, which the Whig ministers managed to prevent for sometime. The appearance of a High Church wing of the new Tory/Country party that emerged after 1697 coincided by design with the appearance of Atterbury's Letter to a Convocation-Man. In 1700 then, upon the assumption of office by their ministerial friends, the High Church Tories were rewarded by the King's calling of Convocation. In 1702 there were scenes of 'unbelievable disorder'.¹⁸ The Bishops tended to identify with Low Church principles in the Church, and Whiggery in politics. This, more than for any other reason was because of the identification of their antagonists, the lesser Clergy, with High Church principles and Toryism. Convocation continued to sit and to be a second arena for quasi-political debate

17. G.V.Bennett, 'Conflict in the Church', in Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714, ed., Geoffrey Holmes, (London: Macmillan, 1969) Chapter 7. Bennett traces both the social aspect and the political aspect of the post-Revolution Church. The political angle is also considered in Holmes and Speck, *op cit.*, pp 49-57.

18 G.V.Bennett, *op cit*, *loc cit*, p 166.

throughout the next reign, with the exception of a brief period of prorogation during the Whig domination of the ministry from 1708 to 1710. Its dissolution brought a close to a turbulent presence but this was not until 1717. At this period, '...the Established Church had been at the very centre of party political strife...'.¹⁹

In 1700, Shaftesbury appears to have been following a Country viewpoint. In the middle of the year, he wrote to Benjamin Furly in Rotterdam of the concern that the death of the Duke of Gloucester had occasioned among those concerned about monarchy. He implies that Furly was in touch with men of republican sentiments in Holland, and suspecting this, we may allow for a bias towards such views as his former host in Holland and correspondent upon matters political, might favour. Early in the correspondence Shaftesbury was anxious to obtain Furly's views and those of his friends, particularly as the situation on the Continent unfolded.²⁰

In November Shaftesbury believed that the existing Parliament would continue to sit. It was dissolved the following month and Shaftesbury's anticipation in such matters, his punditry, was suspect upon other occasions suggesting that he was not close enough to those who were in a position to form better judgments of such affairs. Shaftesbury thought that a new Parliament at this time would have provided so much support for Rochester and Godolphin that they

19. Holmes and Speck, *op cit*, *loc cit*, p52. Note also p 53 extract 2, where a member of the established Church identifies the clergy, the Church, and the universities as being targets for 'dissenters and their party'.

20. T. Forster, Original Letters of Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Anthony, Lord Shaftesbury, (London: 1830) *passim*.

and their friends would have been able to nullify the effects of the Revolution. Shaftesbury's optimism at the prospect of the ministers managing without a new Parliament, was not justified. At the time of the Elections, at which he was active, he presented Furly with an account of his endeavours:

11 January 1700/1

'Wee now in the midst of our elections, of which the West of England having much the greatest share, and I being here plac'd with my fortune, and all my interest, you may imagine I am not a little sollicitouse at this time of danger, having explained to you the extremity of our affaires by these rash councils for a dissolution at this conjecture, which I am satisfyed the King ere this is fully convinced was a wrong measure, enough to ruine us all. But by the sound labours of our friends I am in hopes things are so well balanced that a good Parlemt will be chosen, even under all disadvantages, which, can hardly ever happen again.'

Shaftesbury continued by looking to the brighter side. He hoped that the Tory ministry would not be backed by a Tory parliament, or at least by not too great a Tory majority. He then speculated upon the prospect of the Tory ministry losing their support by having to raise money for the King, which would run counter to the wishes of their supporters. If the Ministry was unwilling to serve the King, then the King would have to look elsewhere, namely towards the Whigs, whose support would be such as they would be unable to adopt a pro-Court policy, for fear of losing their Country Whig allies. The ministerial Whigs, Shaftesbury remarked, had been taught their lesson by the experience of dismissal.

'...As for the disorder and corruptions in our elections in several places, this will but hasten our remedy, and bring on our necessary reformation more speedily. The only thing to be hoped and pray'd

for, is, that the Tory party may not be superior: for if but ever so little inferior, their numbers will be of service rather than of injury: for, as it is said of water or fire, so it may be said of them, that they are good servants, but ill masters; and, as by principles they are slaves, so they are only serviceable when they are kept so, and their slavery and subjection is the only pledge of our freedom, or of the freedom of the world, as far as we in England are contributors to it, and let our friends in Holland know their friends here, and take notice that it is that party that hate the Dutch and love France and the Whiggs the only contrary party that can now save them and England.' 21

The transition to a more bellicose Whig position continued in 1701. Shaftesbury seems to have moved along the spectrum from COUNTRY/Whig to WHIG/Country. He was by this time in the Lords rather than the Commons, and appears to have served there during the early part of the year in such a way that his importance should not be underestimated. Knowing of his involvement helps us to obtain a more specific idea of Shaftesbury's uncertain position in an uncertain situation. However, the increasing appreciation which it is possible to obtain here, of the depth of Shaftesbury's interest and commitment is an important prerequisite to comprehending the quality of his work in the Characteristics.

If Shaftesbury was uncertain over the composition of the new Parliament, he was not alone. A recent commentator has described the Parliament as being under the influence of three forces; the King and his wishes; the Ministers who sought to serve the King and not to alienate their own followers over the possibility of a new war;

21. T. Forster, op cit, pp 113-116 On the likeness of the Tories to good servants but bad masters, see above, and in Henry Horwitz, Parliament, Policy, and Politics in the reign of William III (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977) p 265

and the late Whig ministers, now the Junto Lords, and their followers in the Commons.²²

Shaftesbury was conscientious in his attendance in the Lords during the session of early 1701. From his taking the oaths in the latter half of February, until the prorogation in June, his presence is recorded with a sufficiency to indicate at least as active an interest as that of other 'career' politicians.

The cause of such assiduous attendance was the impeachment of the Junto Lords, together with Portland, for their part in the negotiation and signing of the first Partition Treaty or, in the case of Halifax, on grounds of alleged corruption. The outcome was a further conflict between the two Houses, though not such as had occurred a year earlier, and the eventual acquittal of the Lords concerned, after a trial in which the prosecution failed to present a case.

There were other matters of significance in the lower House with which Shaftesbury would have been involved by virtue of his interests, his brother, and his friends. Such a one, would have been the passing of the Succession bill, and in particular of the clauses designed to protect the 'rights and liberties' of the English. These clauses were aimed at the prevention of what had been seen as undesirable forms of behaviour in a foreign monarch, but more significantly sought also to introduce constitutional

22. Horwitz, op cit. p 281. The account which follows of the events of 1701 and early 1702 is based upon Horwitz's but intended to show what events concerned Shaftesbury, whilst retaining something of a chronological approach.

limitations upon the monarchy, limitations which were associated with the ideas of the Country party. In fact, the clauses were subject to modification and deletion at a later time. The Succession bill passed both Houses.

The prosecution of Lord Somers, though attempted in March upon the grounds of the grant made to Captain Kid^d, was taken up afresh after the disclosure of the matter of a first Partition treaty, the Commons having failed to drive home an earlier attack upon the previous ministry for its part in the second partition treaty of 1700. The first partition treaty had been transacted in 1698. The Whig placemen who still held office were said to have deserted Somers with few exceptions amongst whom were Locke's friends, Sir Walter Yonge and Thomas Stringer. Shaftesbury is on record as having said that 'our friends' were being sacrificed.²³ This would suggest that Shaftesbury was by this time identifying with the Whigs and the Whig Lords rather than with the anti-ministerialist Country tradition which was still following Robert Harley.

The shift from this Country view may have been marked with the growing appreciation of the French threat, which turned the attention away from the past⁶ and more to the prospects for the future. Although the threat from France had been appreciated by the more politically aware since the previous summer, the Commons seem to have been disinclined to take any initiatives until the early summer of 1701. Their awakening involved for some of them a reappraisal of their politics. The Country sentiment which had

23. Horwitz, op. cit., p 288

reaffirmed its existence after 1698, was to some degree outmoded, for if there was to be a war, the question was who was best suited to fight it from the ministerial position? The alternatives that presented themselves were the new Tory ministry, anxious to fulfil the King's commands and retain the backing of the majority of the Commons, or the previous ministry of the Whigs, which had experience of the politics of war and proven ability to raise the funds necessary to fight. It must not have been an easy decision, but the criticisms of the previous sessions against the Whigs would have undermined their position. Shaftesbury had detected the threat earlier than the Commons' consideration of it, and determined to back the Whigs, and if necessary the Whig Lords, thinking, perhaps, to tolerate a lesser evil for the hope of a greater good.

The Whigs in the Lords were not inactive at this time. Horwitz remarks that in May 1701 they attempted to censure the advisers of the dissolution of December 1700. It is probable that Shaftesbury was involved for we have noticed his concern that the Election had been called. The Whigs, in general, were active 'out of doors', seeking to couple their identity and the bellicose sentiments of the non-Parliamentarians among the politically active groups. These groups, such as the Kentish Petitioners, were to harry the parliament, and put pressure upon the Tory ministry to be more active in the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy. In this area they met with only limited success.

Country measures were still attempted, beyond those that were associated with the Succession bill. Sir Edward Seymour after the conduct of the New East India Company in the Election of 1700/1,

suggested a measure of reform for the boroughs where those voting were small in numbers and hence more easily corrupted. The measure failed, for there were many such boroughs, and the people with an effective controlling interest had no wish to sacrifice themselves to such desirable ends. There was also a bill to establish the Bishops in their sees. Shaftesbury was interested in this and reported it as an anti-Court measure to Furly:

'A Bill is brought in the House of Commons for the fixing the Bishops to their sees, and hindering their removalls, by which they depend on the Crown, and are made votes for the Court. 'Tis a dilemma; for, if they throw this Bill out of the House of Lords, they will next time be thrown out themselves' 24

The Bishops were thought to represent a bloc for the court in that they were promoted to the richer sees as a reward for their support of the Crown. Shaftesbury may have approved the measure on grounds of Country sentiment, namely that ~~any~~ diminution of the influence of the Crown was a good thing, or because he wished to see the separation of the ecclesiastical establishment and the government. It is doubtful whether he would have been so cheerful if he had known that a proposal to penalise occasional conformity, the practice by which Dissenters were able to qualify for office, was to be added to the measure. As it transpired, nothing came of the proposal or the bill. The incident does illustrate a little further the difficulties that Shaftesbury faced in that it raises the question of what should an individual, who seeks to assist in

24. T. Forster, op. cit., p 126 Shaftesbury to Furly, 11 March 1701

the promotion of the public good, do, when his beliefs appear to be in conflict with each other, (as in the support of the Junto, and Country measures) or more plainly, downright irrelevant, as this case may suggest.

Despite the more warlike attitude of the people which the Whigs hoped to build upon, the King seemed willing to back his new ministry. The Whigs, like Shaftesbury, found this doubly unkind, for on the first count the King preferred the Tories at this time, and on the second count he seemed to take no notice of Whig appeals to the evidence of experience which they had built up in the previous war. Of course, in addition to their party interest, many Whigs would have argued that the Tories would not put the necessary enthusiasm behind that Shaftesbury was to call the 'common cause'. Williams's attitude remained unchanged by Whig arguments through the summer.

Shaftesbury's correspondence with Furlly at this time reflects some of the frustrations felt as the situation in foreign affairs seemed to hang in limbo, a kind of cold war having developed. Shaftesbury sought to strengthen the bond of his communication with interested Dutch people through the medium of letters to Furlly. He suggests the letters be shwon to Van Twedde and Paats at Rotterdam. He sought to link the Whigs with the republican elements in Holland stressing the common Country base of limited and limitations upon the power of monarchy and the executive. At the same time he wished to ensure that the republican elements in Holland backed the 'common cause' of resistance to France.

In particular Shaftesbury had to attempt to show to the Dutch

that there existed in England sufficient backing for an aggressive policy. The dalliance of the Commons over the supposed failing of a previous war ministry could not be held to have evidenced much of a warlike spirit, the Tories were known to be closer to St Germain than the Whigs could hope to be, but Shaftesbury would still have to persuade the Dutch that the Whigs and the backing of the people would be sufficient to carry the day.²⁵

As part of this sustained correspondence he wrote:

'But now I must hint to you a thing of great importance for you to transact, if you approve of it. You must know then that, there being few of us of the country party here in England, who have any good correspondence or acquaintance with those of the same principles and interest in Holland, and such as these being apt to judge of Holland as if influenc'd by our Court here, nothing that comes from thence has so much credit as when it comes from one of the Honest party, and those out of the Government. All our young men are drawn away by the specious actions of these present managers, who seem so much to promote the domestic liberty, and are under that pretence bringing on a foreign and universal tyranny. Some of these I happen to be acquainted with and they know I have an acquaintance, and some small credit with those of the right party in Holland; and by this means I am able to do some little service, but it would be much more if some help were added, and that some of those gentlemen had the sense of our friends abroad more immediately communicated to them. For instance Lord Paulet well known amongst you, is a man of great influence, and is a little entangled in the nets I tell you of; the other party making it their chief game to work on such men as these, who have great interest both in Country and Parlement. A letter from some of his acquaintance of Rotterdam (Mr Van Twedde suppose, or any such,) might be of use; or if he were mentioned in any letter of mine which I might communicate to him, and in which he saw himself addressed to.

There is a great and worthy young man who has signaliz'd himself in this last debate by speaking beyond all others for the interest of Holland, the Protestant

25. T. Forster, op.cit., pp 129-136. Shaftesbury to Furly: 1st April 1701; 15 April 1701; 6 May 1701

Religion and Europe. It is Lord Pa t's son, Mr Paget, well known as I think I remember to Mr Flink. Might he not some way find occasion to write to him and compliment him on his noble service.' 26

The failure of the King to act in a manner more in accord with Whig views, and his recognition of the Duke of Anjou as the heir to Spain confused the nation, or so Shaftesbury alleged. In the late summer events on the continent and in particular the recognition by Louis of the son of James II, made the pacific attitude less viable. The King determined to dissolve and to transform the ministry into a Whig-dominated one. Shaftesbury was among the first to have advised a dissolution, this being his opinion in August. In his view, the negotiations being carried out by Marlborough for the negotiation of a new Grand Alliance against Louis involved some degree of short sightedness. Shaftesbury believed that no partition was better than the division of the Spanish Empire in such a way as would lead to the probable identity of interests between France and Spain in the event of war and afterwards.

In the late summer, politics also took a more practical turn. The Houses of Parliament no longer sitting, the great chiefs of the parties met at their country houses to plan for the next sitting or the next election. Shaftesbury's rival in the West Country was, he claimed, Sir Edward Seymour, and during the summer the Tory leaders met in a social and political gathering at Seymour's estate of Berry Pomeroy. This led Shaftesbury to remark upon the Tories newly

26. Ibid., pp 138-40 Shaftesbury to Furlly: 9 May 1701. Both Lord Poulett and Paget had moved into the Tories with Harley and later held office under him. Shaftesbury appears to have been trying to recover their allegiance to Country Whiggery.

recovered ability to identify their policy with the wishes of the political nation. He called the Tories, the tares among the wheat. In order to promote some polarisation Shaftesbury thought that a voluntary Abjuration Oath, swearing to support William against the Pretender's interest, should be called for. It was to be voluntary, because a compulsory oath would be taken by the Tories and the compulsion pleaded in mitigation at St Germain's

In November, the King announced the intention to dissolve Parliament, a move which caught both ministers and men ~~like~~ Shaftesbury by surprise. William had not indicated beforehand, by the changes in his ministers, which party he was backing, where the support of the Crown would be placed. This was contrary to the practice of the previous year, and if the intention was to achieve a Whig ministry, the failure to make these changes, must be regarded as a handicapping of that party. Despite this, Shaftesbury entered into the campaign with more zeal than ever and the General Election of ^{December} 1701 must be regarded as the acme of his active political career.

Shaftesbury turned to the Junto for support. Wharton, the ablest political campaigner of them all, came down to the West Country in person to assist. Bishop Burnet made it clear where his clergy were expected to vote. This time Maurice's candidature was for both the borough seat of Weymouth, and the more ambitious

target of a seat representing the county of Wiltshire.²⁷

There was in fact, a whole complex of activity at constituency level in which Shaftesbury or his servants and agents were involved. His sisters had married into families amongst whom local politics were followed. Elizabeth Ashley, as Mrs James Harris, wrote to tell her elder brother of the state of politics in Shaftesbury. It was as M.P. for one of this borough's two seats that Shaftesbury managed to get his friend Sir John Cropley elected, despite his being an 'outsider' and not in possession of land in the neighbourhood, (a matter that Shaftesbury saw fit to provide for in his Will, in order to ensure Sir John's continued opportunity of sitting for the borough). Another sister, Dorothy Hooper married into the local gentry. Her husband Edward was of sufficient substance for his appointment as Sherriff to have been proposed and for Somers to think of his standing for Parliament (in 1705). Outside of 'family', a more broadly defined concept in those times, were others with whom Shaftesbury maintained a correspondence for the purpose of furthering the interests of the Whigs. These included Lord Pembroke, John Mordaunt, Thomas Freke, and Awnsham Churchill, as well as local men of importance who did, or could, control a

27. On Wharton's involvement; Marquess of Landsdowne, 'Whig Politicians c 1700', Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine 46 (1932-4). This contains some errors on the kinship relations of Ashley. On Burnet's tactics; 'The Diary of Thomas Naish', ed. Doreen Slatter, Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Records Branch 20 (1964) Devises 1965 pp 46-7 Also, on the Election; R.G.Stuckley 'An Analysis of the Parliamentary Representation of Wiltshire 1688-1714', Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine 54 (1952) pp 289-304

portion of the votes. At this level Shaftesbury's interest may have diminished after 1702, but it never became unimportant until after his leaving England in 1711, and even then he made some attempt to secure continued Whig representation. In this, as at other elections, Shaftesbury contributed to the welfare of his constituency, by gift. Maurice later wrote of three elections having cost him £700. Shaftesbury bought freeholds to secure the vote which went with them, and divided them in order to make two votes.²⁸

In the short run, the outcome of Shaftesbury's efforts was success. The two Whigs, Ashe and Ashley were elected to serve for Wiltshire. Sir John Cropley was elected for Shaftesbury, a 'gain' which extended Shaftesbury's parliamentary interest. His retained influence at Weymouth and Melcombe Regis would have gone to assist another Whig candidate, and in addition he had 'interest' at Downton with which to promote his and his party's views, and which was similarly utilised.²⁹

Shaftesbury wrote to Furly to tell him of his successes. If in his enthusiasm he exaggerated, claiming that Shaftesbury Borough was now, 'entirely recover'd' (ie Whig), this is perhaps understandable, although it is helpful to keep in mind the fact that he wanted Furly and his friends in Holland to believe in the success of the

28. PRO 30/24/20/77. John Wheelock to Lord Shaftesbury, 29 October 1703. PRO 30/24/19 Estate Book, records of Shaftesbury's political 'interest'.

29. National Library of Scotland MS 585 1075. It also seems probable that the family influence which had first enabled his election at the Dorset borough of Poole in 1695 was again invoked. The Estate Book has an entry Poole, Weymouth, Shaftesbury, 1700' but the 1701 election entries concern Downton, so there is room for conjecture in the case of Poole.

Whigs at the polls.³⁰

In contrast, the Tories had started the campaign under disadvantages, in spite of the weight of the Crown not being used against them. However, the Tories did not do so badly as they had feared, and the Whigs less well than they may have hoped to do. It was not until shortly after the Election that the action of the King over some appointments indicated that the Whigs were once again in favour. Their ascendancy was confirmed in the Commons by those indicators of party strength, the debates over disputed Elections. In practice this ascendancy was insufficient for them to be able to rely upon having a majority in the ordinary course of affairs. Despite Shaftesbury's elation, the election was a victory for the Whigs only insofar as it redressed the balance, and enabled both parties to vie with each other in obliging the King.

The changes that had been brought about in two other Country members since 1698 may be remarked as illustrating that Shaftesbury's uncertainty and drift were by no means confined to himself. In this Parliament Robert Harley, who had achieved the integration of Country and Tory parties and brought about the decline of the Junto Whigs, and their fall from office after 1697, was noticed in his forwardness to assist the King's business.³¹ Again one of those identified as a Poussineer, that is one associated with the French Secretary, and therefore suspected of pro-French sympathies, had

30. Rand. p 309 Shaftesbury to Furly 29 December 1701

31. Horwitz, op. cit., pp 300-1.

been Charles Davenant. Davenant was a member of the previous House of Commons though excluded by his failure to be re-elected from the last Parliament of William's reign. He was the probable author of a manuscript that circulated in mid-1697 and which is to be found among the Shaftesbury papers, called An Essay on Public Vertue, in which he adopts a Country viewpoint against the youthful and allegedly inexperienced Whig leaders. In 1701, Davenant was attacking the Whigs, old and new, as selfish, self seeking, or foolishly blind. In the next reign, he was content to hold office until his death in 1714.³¹

Shaftesbury was not a mere spectator in the new Parliament. In conjunction with Wharton and Haversham, he promoted the Lords' bill for a voluntary Abjuration Oath, a measure which, he had had in mind for some months. In the Commons, the Lords' bill was rejected on the grounds of its concerning itself with money, since it imposed a pecuniary forfeit. Secondly, the Tories attempted to make it mandatory.³² The Abjuration bill was eventually passed during the King's last illness, in the beginning of March 1702.

31. There were of course others who found that they had shifted their ground or that the ground appeared to have shifted beneath them. Shaftesbury's attempt to persuade Paget and Poulett described above suggests that they could be seen as being in much the same case. The Essay on Public Vertue as at PRO 30/24/46A/90 is also in the Harleian Miscellany attributed to Davenant. The attribution in the Shaftesbury papers is unlikely to be correct, as the Essay is unlike the third Earl's style and hand, and his father is an even less likely candidate for authorship. Davenant had a source of ill feeling against Halifax of the Junto, who had not assisted him to obtain a place in 1694; British Library Add., MS 7121 f 19.

32. Horwitz, op. cit., pp 301-2

A noteworthy aspect of this is that one of Shaftesbury's fellow promoters was a Junto leader, namely Wharton, and in the matter of the Abjuration bill, Shaftesbury was prepared to be associated with such a man and such a politician, (Wharton's reputation for immorality and irreligion was considerable).

The Lords Journals show that Shaftesbury was very active in January, February and March to the time of William's death and immediately thereafter. In April his attendance was rather less frequent, and by mid-April he no longer attends. His brief success in the Lords during three sessions had culminated in the Indian summer of the Whigs during the early months of 1702.

Shaftesbury published little that concerned politics directly. What he did publish was a short pamphlet, based upon the King's speech at the opening of his last Parliament. The speech itself was later said to have been composed by Somers, although the authorship of this pamphlet that derived from it, is clearly Shaftesbury's.³³ The Paradoxes of State was written to the occasion, and cannot be said to be a well developed political philosophy. On the other hand, its contents tend to back up the suggestion that Shaftesbury had shifted along the spectrum of Whiggery from the Country end, to a more typical pro-war view.

33. Horwitz. op.cit. p 300 and footnotes. PRO 30/24/20/55. Shaftesbury to Furly. 30 January 1702. Forster, op cit. p 167 Shaftesbury to Furly 6 January 1702. This would give strength to the suggestion of collaboration between Shaftesbury and Somers since the pamphlet reached the stage of being printed so quickly.

He discusses several propositions by which he hopes to show that the distinctions that have been made in past years are no longer valid in the situation in which Englishmen now find themselves. The purpose of this is to appeal to common ground and unite the people against the common threat of France and Popery.

He argues:

- (i) That the particular interests of the Court and the Country, of Prerogative and Privilege, and of the King and the People, may be, and at this time are, the same.
- (ii) That whatever names were formerly used to distinguish parties in England, those distinctions between Whig and Tory, Williamite and Jacobite, are no longer real distinctions, the only valid distinction being those in a French, and those in an English interest.
- (iii) That the most inveterate enemies to civil liberty are those who would now act the part of Commonwealthmen; and that the real promoters of a Popish hierarchy and spiritual tyranny, are such as contend for the right of presbyters, against the episcopal and metropolitical authority of the Church.
- (iv) That the favour and indulgence of the present Government towards the Protestant dissenters, much envied by the Anti-Protestant Churchmen, is in fact the surest and only way of regaining the dissenters to the national communion.
- (v) That the spirit of those who, in the present circumstances of Nation and of Europe, would declare for a peace and are against a war, is in reality a spirit of sedition,

(v) continued

intestine war, private revenge and cruelty; it tends directly to such a war as will end in the conquest of these Nations, the establishment of a French administration in England under the Prince of Wales, as is already the case in Spain under the Duke of Anjou.

(iv) That France and Spain are already as much united under two Kings as ever they can be under one King.

(vii) That whatever may be alledged about the Emperor's immediate interest to restore his family by placing his son the arch-Duke on the throne of Spain, yet it is not true that in the war that the Emperor is a Principal and we Seconds, for England and Holland must be principals together with the Emperor.

(viii) That it is not only safer but easier to fight for all Spain rather than for a part; and for the entire restoration of the House of Austria, than for a satisfaction to the Emperor by means of a new partition treaty.

(ix) That it is not advantageous for England and Holland to attempt to conquer the mines of the Spanish West Indies, for the possession of the gold and silver mines would not only ruin the Constitution but would also destroy industry, manufacture, trade, agriculture, manners, strength and riches in any people in less than a generation.

(x) That it is not injurious to the interest of England to have a Prince on the throne who is not a native of the realm, and that there could be no greater advantages

(x) continued

from any succession that lie in the prospect of the Protestant House of Hanover.

(xi) That in the ensuing war, whatever is given in taxes will not be given to the King, nor will anything be given away from ourselves.

On the basis of this close paraphrase, it can be seen that Shaftesbury rejects the Country position and the associated Commonwealth ideology in propositions (i) and (iii), that he seeks to defend the low-Church Bishops from their High Church attackers, (iv), and that he is setting out what was to become the Whig platform for fighting the war, namely that the English should play a principal role and not confine themselves to a secondary part, and that the war should be for the possession of Spain, rather than for some concessions. He also is seeking to spike his opponents' guns, in the last proposition, and in that concerning the gains to be sought for England (ix). This, he does, on the basis of that an influx of gold and silver would undermine the material and moral well-being of the nation, and here he may have simply had the Spanish example in mind rather than any ideological or ethical viewpoint. Shaftesbury argues these propositions out more completely in the text. In particular, he writes that the aims of the Whigs and Country have been achieved or are now 'in reversion', that is provided for in the clauses of the Act of Succession outlined above. Moreover, in saying this, he rejects the need for priority for any advances in the Country/Commonwealth programme, isolating the people who 'pretend' to act out of Commonwealth principles. Perhaps,

here he had in mind, those like Seymour who had proposed Electoral reform in order to keep out East India Company influence, or the bill to deal with the translation of Bishops as a reward for political services, mentioned earlier. More generally, there was the realisation that the Commonwealth platform was not one that could be carried to the electorate, but represented something more akin to a 'Fabian' element in the Labour Party of the twentieth century.³⁴

The accession of Anne brought about the reversal of Shaftesbury's political fortunes. Although the parliament continued to sit, it was soon clear to Shaftesbury and other Whigs that their day was over, for the time being at least. Shaftesbury stayed in England for some months before leaving for Holland. In the next House of Commons, his activity at the Election of December 1701 was reflected upon unfavourably. In December 1702, he took the oaths in the Lords once again, in time to join with his party in opposing the Occasional Conformity Bill.³⁵ He does not appear to have attended subsequently but left his vote by proxy, a device open to the Lords, with Somers. In November 1705 he took the oaths at the beginning of Anne's second Parliament but possibly only in order to pass his

34. Shaftesbury's association with the Commonwealthmen seems intermittent after this time. His association with Molesworth was taken up again in circumstances very different when Molesworth was identified as one of Lord Godolphin's 'Treasurer's Whigs', and Shaftesbury was seeking a place on behalf of Thomas Micklethwaite, who had helped him achieve success in the election of December 1701. There was however, some continuity through Sir John Cropley, and General James Stanhope in the Commons, although nothing approaching party discipline, Shaftesbury's main concern being that the war be fought upon the right footing, and continued until the right ends had been achieved.

35. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, pp 101 - 102

proxy once more to Somers. In 1708, despite the recovery of the party, Shaftesbury was able to take the oaths only, presumably for the same end.

In the reversal of party fortunes that appears after the accession, Shaftesbury's exclusion takes on particular colouration from this time in his efforts to procure a place in the wartime administrative structure for his assistant Thomas Micklewaite. Appeals through Lord Sunderland and Charles Spencer, related to the Duke of Marlborough, were of no avail. Shaftesbury does not appear to have appealed to Harley, one-time leader of the Country gentlemen. He did not achieve a success until 1709, when the Marlborough-Godolphin ministry was well on the way to being under a predominantly Junto influence.

Shaftesbury in fact, had come closer to the Court Whigs than might have been expected in the latter end of 1701 and early 1702. The need to set the war upon a sound basis and to clarify the principles for which it was being fought had overcome his scruples against the corruption of the Court. He had himself been offered a place by the King, and had been associated with the Junto. In Holland he seems to have reacted against his nearly being 'drawn in', in mainly personal terms but, in fact, the problem derived from the nature of the situation. Robert Molesworth had found this over the disbanding of the army after the war of the League of Augsburg, when principle told him that disbandment was desirable, and reality persuaded him that it would be foolish. Shaftesbury's similar conflict of opinion seems to have manifested itself on this and other occasions: as he wrote to Cropley after the failure of the 'Whimsical Clause' to limit

the number of placement in the Commons:

'There's nothing in the growth of liberty I dread so much as a sarfeit, nothing so dangerous as being fed too high. Our Court Patriots that have fed us hitherto with so niggardly a hand have been better nurses of us than they imagine. Had they not so long withheld the Triennial bill, the Treason bill and kept the cup by force from our mouth when we had only a faint and false craving, we had not since taken it as good nourishment and well digested into our constitution. And though there be a plain reason why such as you or I should appear for every right thing, yet there is many a one which, whilst we countenance and promote, we may tremble for. Did I not tremble, think you, for the Treason bill when there were such plots within, and for the disbanding of the army when there was such a force abroad? What think you of that refused bill which often (when ill and dying with fatigue) I told you lay on my heart as Calais on Queen Mary's, I mean the Qualification bill? Think you that even at this hour I should not tremble if such a bill were like to pass? But the time will come when the self-denial bill shall be full and perfect, and this afterwards crown and rivet our constitution....'. 36

Often, the measures that Shaftesbury wished to support were put forward in such a way that the immediate benefit to those whose principles he opposed, was more clear than the supposed benefit to the Nation, as was the case with the Treason Trials legislation. This was one reason why politics proved a difficult area for Shaftesbury. Another was the fact that he kept feeling that events were controlling him, and not the other way about. His subsequent political air of detachment reflects a different picture. He liaised with Somers, corresponding with him over the Shaftesbury 'interest'. It is perhaps worth noting that it was Somers rather than any other of the leading

36. PRO 30/24/22/2. Shaftesbury to Cropley 18 February 1706; quoted in Holmes and Speck, op.cit., p 150. Molesworth's position is presented in Horwitz, op.cit., p 216

Junto Whigs that he elected to co-operate with. Somers, he regarded as a Statesman rather than any other: the rest were more politicians or managers. Somers took a moderate line, stressing how helpful it would be, if say, Maurice could be persuaded to stand at the election of 1705.³⁷ Again, Shaftesbury used his detachment as a means of reminding his correspondents of their duty, as with Cropley, and of promoting the 'cause' as with Furly. This change was the result of his stay in Holland when he had sought to review the basis of his opinions. The period before this must be seen as a time when inherited views had been tried and found to be less than satisfactory.

Although for Shaftesbury an interest in politics and the public good was to be maintained, in an account of his involvement, the death of William and the accession of Anne marks a significant watershed; thereafter the nature of his involvement was different and he was almost entirely inactive in politics at Westminster. Moreover there was, after the visit to Holland, the fundamental basis from which he could estimate the personal valuation that he ought to accord to day to day political activity. It is to this that we shall turn next. In conclusion, it may be said that at this time, for Shaftesbury, politics and philosophy had been tried

37. For Somers, and the Junto Whigs, the opportunity of influencing their wayward Country wing, through Shaftesbury, seems unlikely to have been overlooked. There is evidence to support the view suggested above in PRO 30/24/22/18 Shaftesbury to Somers 25 December 1704, and 30/24/22/39 and 40, Shaftesbury to Somers 13 and 22 May 1708. It may be inferring too much to assert Shaftesbury's influence over the Country Whigs (in any case, only partial) was exercised in accordance with Junto wishes.

and found wanting. Their failure might be best explained by thinking of the way that Shaftesbury wanted to look at the world, in which he wished to balance thought and action. Philosophy was too abstract, confined to colleges, mere speculation. Politics on the other hand, was almost too practical, with short-term considerations preponderating. The lens of the Shaftesbury viewer, was either too far, or too close, the image too small, or too large; the necessary adjustment came from his second trip to Holland in which philosophy and practice were synthesised . The Characteristics is the expression of the 'right' synthesis , carefully tailored to appeal to his contemporaries.

CHAPTER FOUR.

CATHARSIS AND REVALUATION

An interesting feature of the careers of some leading public figures in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in England is their ability to accept defamation and political defeat with remarkable personal resilience. Shaftesbury's grandfather, for example, had elected to flee the country only after it was patently clear that to stay would invite further attempts at prosecution by the Court, attempts which were unlikely to stop short at the sentence of imprisonment in the Tower, which he had already experienced. Robert Spencer the second Earl of Sunderland, had left the country after the defeat of James with the policies of whom, he was too readily identified. In this case, Sunderland managed the not inconsiderable achievement of returning to serve William. Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Marquis of Carmarthen, also demonstrated considerable toughness as a leading politician under three successive rulers, Charles, James and William. All three were major politicians, of differing views, who knew well enough the prospect that lay before the unsuccessful rebel. In our later period the Junto Lords, Somers, Halifax, Wharton and Orford, having shown signs of division amongst themselves after their several dismissals by William, acted more collectively afterwards and were prepared to share the political wilderness and political office, together. Resilience then, as a personal quality and as a matter of principle, was a more admirable quality shown by some politicians, during a period in which the

political world lacked stability.

In spite of the corruption of the times, something which was hard to prove then and has become harder to prove since, the motivations of most of the leading figures seem unlikely to have been entirely mercenary. Most if by no means all, of the leading figures, if originally drawn to the Court by hopes of high office were at some time presented with the opportunity for comfortable retreat. Despite protestations, such as expressed wishes to resign, a particular feature of Godolphin, they usually pursued office even when displaced, for office carried power and patronage as well as monetary reward. These motives tend to look to the darker side of character; there was also a better side which found itself presented, if rarely acknowledged as genuine, in the demonstration of a sense of public duty. Duty, perhaps, to the monarchy, accompanied the idea of duty to the nation or people. Sunderland had expressed the former in his view that it mattered not who served the King as long as the King was served. Somers found the more abstract idea a more comfortable one. In reality, the distinction may have been to a degree artificial to many contemporaries. To overlook the sense of public duty, of a moral attitude toward involvement, would be to be unduly cynical about the motivation of these individuals, and their fellows, in whom we find self-interest and the desire to be of service to the public, mixed in varying proportion.

In the case of Shaftesbury, educated to an inheritance, to the public as well as to his estates in Dorset, the idea of being unable to fulfil his obligations to a wider public was unwelcome and dis-

comforting. In 1702 Shaftesbury was confronted, along with other Whigs, with the possibility of effective political exile on an indefinite basis. The war, which might have caused them to think that their services would be required, was not expected to last as long as it did, and at that time the ministry which was to manage the affairs of state and the war, was clearly not going to afford opportunity for the Whigs. In addition, Shaftesbury's case was exacerbated by the deterioration in his health which had resulted from his exertions in the Lords and at three elections (January 1701, December 1701 and July 1702). This would have made life at Westminster and Whitehall difficult even had he and his friends been in favour. In Shaftesbury's situation then, with short-term retirement at the very least forming the immediate prospect, the question that presents itself is one of reconciliation. How was he to reconcile his wish to serve the public, with his inability to do so? The idea of a 'loyal opposition' was not as yet generally accepted.

In fact, that would have meant joining with the Junto and the Court Whigs. Initially, this must have appeared unacceptable. Yet many of Shaftesbury's Country ideas seemed even to a moderately realistic evaluation, inappropriate, as he himself had acknowledged in the Paradoxes of State. In itself, Country thinking was in need of reappraisal and Shaftesbury would therefore have had to find a political policy, as well as a strategy and tactics, or accept leadership from elsewhere.

One possible course of action would be to try and live with the situation, facing the fact the avenues to serve the public were

for the time being closed, to take advantage of what remained, and to live out as pleasant an existence as was possible. Still, the sense of duty might not remain appeased. Moreover, one pursuit that lay open to Shaftesbury, that of philosophy, had so far yielded lessons that went to the head but not to the heart. The result of his philosophical studies had been a dissatisfaction with the state and content of philosophy. Similarly the result of his political activities, in the aftermath of the last months of William's reign, must have seemed strange, as if he had parted from his principles as a ship from its mooring.

Shaftesbury was ill and ready for reappraisal both in philosophy and politics. The nature of the reappraisal was such that it involved going back to those classical authors to whom he had referred in a letter to Locke, and starting from there, he set about adjusting his perspective upon the world. His illness and his determination to retire into Holland, as a private gentleman once again, led to such an adjustment taking an especially personal aspect.

In this chapter, the nature of this revaluation will be examined from the viewpoint of the history of ideas, and not primarily from that of a psychological explanation of what was going on at this time, although that aspect is not without interest. In the nature and substance of Shaftesbury's rebuilding lies the foundations of his philosophy. The foundation of his future conduct lay in the application of that which he had learned from the Roman Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. The foundations of the Characteristics derive from his study in Holland in 1698-9 and

1703 -4. Philosophy and personal practice were then reconciled on the personal level. Thereafter remained the task of bringing about a reconciliation between philosophy and public practice.

Several years after the death of Shaftesbury the philosopher David Hume turned his attention briefly to the philosophy of Stoicism. He wrote a short Essay which he called The Stoic, and by way of a subtitle, he added The man of Action and Virtue. The main point he was concerned to make was that the Stoic was not merely an observer but also a participant. Hume epitomises, in a florid style, which echoes that of Shaftesbury on occasion, the Stoic view, adding Humean irony with effect:

'... the human mind, which being of celestial origin swells with the divinest and most enlarged affections, and, carrying its attention beyond kindred and acquaintance, extends its enevolent wishes to the most distant posterity. It views liberty and laws as the source of human happiness, and devotes itself, with the utmost alacrity, to their guardianship and protection, Toils, dangers, death itself, carry their charms when we brave them for the public good, and ennobles that being which we generously sacrifice for the interests of our country. Happy the man whom indulgent fortune allows to pay to virtue what he owes to nature, and to make a generous gift of what must otherwise be ravished from him by cruel necessity.' 1

Philosophers are men who have merely fixed the rules of conduct, but when they are able to apply these rules and to live according to them, they are no longer men, no longer philosophers, but are Sages. To the Sage, virtue is its own reward. Hume continues:

1. David Hume, Essays Moral, Political and Literary (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) p 154.

'...There is surely a Being who presides over the universe, and who, with infinite wisdom and power, has reduced the jarring elements into just order and proportion. Let the speculative reasoners dispute, how far this beneficent Being extends his care, and whether he prolongs our existence beyond the grave, in order to bestow on virtue its just reward, and render it fully triumphant. The man of morals, without deciding any thing on so dubious a subject, is satisfied with the portion marked out to him by the Supreme Disposer of all things. Gratefully he accepts of that further reward prepared for him; but if disappointed, he thinks not virtue an empty name; but justly esteeming it his own reward, he gratefully acknowledges the bounty of his Creator who, by calling him into existence, has thereby afforded him an opportunity of once acquiring so invaluable a possession.'

In 1698 and 1702 Shaftesbury retreated to Holland to meditate on the Stoic Philosophy. The retreat abroad may have been for his health, the peat fires of Holland aiding where the coal fires of London hindered, but it was also for financial reasons, Shaftesbury having on both visits reasons to set right his affairs by retrenchment. In addition, for the first visit, and in all probability for the second, he wished to set a physical distance between himself and his political friends in order to be free from their importuning him to become more involved.

During these years he wrote down many of his reflections, interspersed with extracts from classical writers, in a set of notebooks. The entries themselves suggest that his retreat was far from being a source of uninterrupted pleasure, as Shaftesbury exhorts himself to moral improvement and castigates his own weakness. The philosophy is used to allay a deep-seated mental

anguish, although it emerges also in the basis of a reasoned attitude toward the world.

The conflict was more fundamental than the resolution of contemporary conflict in political ideas. There is little of an obviously political character in the notebooks, although there are occasional references to particular forms of behaviour or occasions. The notebooks do not however, contain reflections upon the Revolution and its justification, on the role of Church and State, or strategies for the war, such as might be expected. The outcome of the retirements to Holland, in terms of philosophical writing, was the Sociable Enthusiast, the basis of the Moralists, and not the first treatise in the Characteristics, the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm.

Stoicism for Shaftesbury represented more than a philosophy of consolation. Shaftesbury shows little regard for Seneca, whom he regarded as a courtier influenced by philosophy. The reflections in Seneca upon the unimportance of material possessions and particularly the suggestions of suicide find no echo in Shaftesbury. In this sense, his retreats were preparations for re-entering the arena, his eye was fixed upon the public good. The fashionable Stoicism of some contemporaries which expressed itself in loud protestations of indifference, was also not the kind with which Shaftesbury was engaged. Lastly, he was not cultivating stoicism analogous to the 'stoical' resignation of the vulgar, the attributed philosophy of the common people unreasoningly bearing the unreasonable. The stoicism in Shaftesbury, as in the Humean character, is the means for protection and perspective in

in public life.

Although some parameters of what Shaftesbury's Stoicism was or was not, can be drawn in this way, to appreciate the full significance, it is necessary to have an outline of Stoic thinking in order that we can perceive more clearly what Shaftesbury found most congenial.

In Classical times, in contrast to the practices of early 18th century Britain, the concerns of morality from the viewpoint of the individual were catered for by the philosopher rather than the theologian. Religion was more overtly concerned with the outward forms, that is, with the societal functions, such as ensuring that the appropriate rites were performed in the proper ways, in the correct manner. The Gods, worshipped after the appropriate fashion would hold back their wrath and vengeance, and even protect the state. Insofar as the individual was concerned, the Gods might give signs, but were not expected to relate on a person-to-deity basis. Further, the concern with the spiritual well-being of the individual, exemplified in the mechanism of the confessional of the Roman Catholic Church, was, or rather would have been, incongruent in pre-Christian religion.

In his earliest philosophical opinions Shaftesbury had shown signs of thinking that the Classical arrangements were better than those of contemporary society. Whilst it is doubtful whether he wanted to restrict the role of the Church to ceremonial functions only, it seems that he did think that for some individuals in his society, philosophy was more appropriate than theology.

Against this broad concern of philosophy, classical thinking

developed. Philosophers of various traditions sought to serve the needs of an educated, literate and articulate ruling class. Of the various schools of thought, Stoicism was but one. Stoic teachings may be regarded as having a more religious, spiritual character than other schools.

The founding fathers of Stoicism were Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes of Chrysippus. The name Stoic derived from the colonnade of stoa in Athens where Zeno had taught. This was about the end of the 4th and through the 3rd centuries B.C.

Greek Stoicism was centred upon the nature of materialism, monism and mutation. In materialism there was the idea that all things have some kind of bodily substance, even such 'things' as thought and time. Monism embraced the idea that all things could be seen as expressions or manifestations of a unifying principle of mind. Mutation was used to signify the idea that all things were in a state of transition or change.

Cleanthes provided a framework which illustrates the areas which were of concern to Stoics under the Greeks. Philosophy he thought consisted in striving after wisdom, and wisdom was the knowledge of things human and divine. Knowledge could be segmented in the following way:

	a) Logic	Logic Rhetoric
Knowledge	b) Physics	Physics Theology
	c) Ethics	Ethics Politics

The point here is that Stoicism was not at this stage exclus-

ively concerned with ethics or morality. Indeed, Chrysippus seems to have been predominantly interested in logic.

The predominant strain of moral thinking that was of interest to Shaftesbury was expressed by the Roman Stoics. In particular, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Epictetus seem to have impressed themselves, as Shaftesbury no doubt thought they ought, upon his personality as well as his understanding.

A third Roman Stoic Shaftesbury was less happy with namely Seneca, whose writings he rejected. Yet Seneca, as politician in exile, under Nero, might appear to have served as a model for future generations of politicians. His prominence as an expositor of Stoic sentiments to later generations, would render any account in which he was omitted even such a supporting account as this is, inadequate. Moreover, in the primary study of Shaftesbury's Stoicism, albeit rather preliminary, Seneca, receives little attention.³

Seneca, was born in Spain. He was well educated and had travelled fairly widely when he adopted Stoic beliefs, or professions. These beliefs, he seems not have decided, should have been more widely known, and so it became not only a matter of personal philosophy but also one of propagation. Seneca suffered from ill health, asthma, and was twice exiled, once in the reign of Caligula and again under Claudius, the successor to Caligula. His place

3. Esther Tiffany, 'Shaftesbury as Stoic', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XXXVII, (1923): 642-684. I concur with much of this article, which has been often read but less frequently digested. This account is designed to complement and supplement against the context of a different background.

before the public was confirmed however, when he assume a sort of co-directorship of the Empire. This was between A.D.49 and A.D.59 with particular emphasis upon the second half of the decade. Thereafter, the Emperor Nero determined to control his own affairs, and Seneca's leadership was progressively weakened. His fellow 'director' Burrus died in A.D.62 and shortly thereafter Seneca determined to retire as diplomatically as he could. Three years later, Nero required him to commit suicide for his alleged treason against the Emperor.

During these three last years he wrote his Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium, which were more of a testament of philosophy than familiar letters. In his career as a public servant, Seneca seems to have exercised some flexibility in relating his philosophy to his life style; the manner in which he lived occasioning criticism from his enemies in the state.⁴

Seneca in fact, is superficially most akin to Shaftesbury of the Stoics of the early Roman Empire, although this is a comparison Shaftesbury would have rejected. He wrote of Seneca in the Characteristics, devoting a lengthy footnote to the Roman politician. His criticism was based upon Seneca's pretending to write letters when it was patently clear that there was no correspondent in view, and

4. Seneca, Letters from a Stoic. Selected and translated with an Introduction by Robin Campbell. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969) pp 7-14.
Philosophy under the Early Empire, prepared for Open University by John Ferguson (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1975) passim.

that he was using a form improperly:

'...'Tis not the person, character or genius. but the style and manner of this great man which we presume to censure. We acknowledge his noble sentiments and worthy actions. We own the patriot and good minister; but we reject the writer...' 5

Shaftesbury commended Seneca for attempting to halt the onrush of decadence in the Empire. Although he himself contributed to the decline of Roman literature, we may excuse him, thinks Shaftesbury, because of his efforts in the political world. It is Seneca the statesman rather than Seneca the philosopher that Shaftesbury praises.

In contrast the notebooks from which Shaftesbury built up the basis of his philosophy are entirely personal, and are not conceived as fit to be seen by others. The main sources that we find used here are Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. The former acts as philosophical mentor, the latter as personal model and aide. Although there is some overlap, Shaftesbury selecting the expression of views which best suited his purpose, and setting it down in his own context, the balance inclines that way, to the educative and to the therapeutic.

Epictetus was a freed slave who had heard lectures from the Stoic Rufus Musonius. He lived in the latter half of the first century A.D., and into the beginning of the second. Expelled with other philosophers by Domitian, he left Rome and established him-

self at Nicopolis in Epirus, in Greece. Here he established a school which he regarded as a healing place for sick souls. His views were recorded by a pupil Flavius Arrianus, or more commonly 'Arrian'.⁶

In contrast to the humble but dignified Epictetus, Shaftesbury's other source of philosophical help was a Roman Emperor. He lived in the middle of the second century, dying in A.D. 180. He was Emperor from A.D. 161, passing much of his time in military camps fighting the enemies of Rome, before succumbing to illness at a camp by the Danube. He wrote his Meditations as they later became known, for himself. The intention seems to have been to maintain some sense of purpose and perspective in an existence that was at once insular, and crowded.⁷

The personal affinities that Shaftesbury may have thought to share with Marcus Aurelius are not hard to recognise. Both had occasion to lament the public role that their birth had thrust upon them, whilst not contemplating a rejection of that role. Marcus suggests that he would rather have devoted his life to philosophy and not to being Emperor, and that he is failing in his

6. Epictetus, The Discourses as reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments. Translated by W.A. Oldfather in two volumes. (London: Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1967), Introduction pp vii-xxx. Hereafter cited as Epictetus, book and section(s).
7. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the communings with himself of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. A revised text and a translation into English by C.R. Haines, (London: Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1916). More familiarly known as the Meditations, it will hereafter be cited as such together with the book and section(s).

philosophical pursuits because of his public duties. He instructs himself not to complain about his lot, and particularly not to complain about the Court which seems to have upset him especially. Shaftesbury's anti-Court principles could easily be transferred into such a viewpoint, though derived from a different background. Shaftesbury's sense of duty necessitated^t the performance of roles, such as that of estate owner, which he may have wished to avoid, as indeed he did for some time, but which he had to come back to, or at least to maintain contact with. In his duty to the public, he appears willing as well as dutiful, but the form that fulfilling the social obligation took, Shaftesbury was less happy about. This social criticism about what he ironically called the 'polite age' in which he lived started, as we have seen, in the early 1690's. An option open to Shaftesbury was to exercise these duties at a remote level, as he managed the Estates through his servant, and Steward, Wheelock, or his political interest through Cropley and Maurice Ashley. These possibilities of fellowship with others despite the breadth of time, his fellow feeling for the Stoics of the Empire, may have prompted Shaftesbury upon his philosophical pursuit. As with any author with whose sentiments we can identify, the empathy is more powerful in the first instance than the understanding.

If these seem superficial grounds for attraction, there is revealed in the Meditations a similar concern with self as is later to be found in Shaftesbury's notebooks. The Meditations tell us much about the character of Marcus Aurelius as well as much about his philosophy. Marcus, for example, instructs himself not to let himself be deceived about his exercises, his philosophical studies.

Of his good intentions to read works in his old age he writes:

'Go astray no more; for thou art not likely to read thy little Memoranda, or the Acts of the Romans and the Greeks of Old Time, and the extracts from their writings which thou wast laying up against thy old age...' 8

This essentially personal remark is accompanied by others addressed to or focussed upon , a wider world, such as the Court, and emerges through a philosophical setting. Here, the idea of a Spectator, certainly of great importance in the 18th century, is expressed in personal terms:

'Take a bird's eye view of the world, its endless gatherings and ceremonials, voyagings manifold in storm and calm, and the vicissitudes of things coming into being, or ceasing to be..' 9

This idea was common to other philosophies, but by the Stoics it was refined into a constituent part of philosophical practice. Another idea that together with this one, is found in Shaftesbury's notebook and the Characteristics, is that of the self-critical aspect of the rational soul. A rational soul for Marcus Aurelius, not only views externals but is capable of being directed upon itself, is capable of self-analysis, of self-criticism.¹⁰

Returning to the personal, Marcus exhorts himself:

'Thou must have three rules ready for use, Firstly, not to do anything, that thou doest, aimlessly, or otherwise than as Justice herself would have acted; and to realise that all that befalls thee from without is due either to Chance or to Providence, nor hast thou any call to blame Chance or to impeach Providence. Secondly; this: to think what each

8. Meditations III, 14.

9. Ibid., IX 30.

10. Ibid., XI.1. The echoing theme in the Characteristics is in the treatise 'Soliloquy: or Advice to an Author'.

creature is from conception till it receives a living soul, and from its reception of a living soul till its giving back of the same, and out of what it is built up and into what it is dissolved. Thirdly, that if carried suddenly into mid-heaven thou shouldst look down upon human affairs and their infinite diversity thou wilt indeed despise them, seeing at the same time in one view how great is the host that peoples the air and the aether around thee; and that, however often thou wert lifted up on high, thou wouldst see the same sights, everything identical in kind, everything fleeting. Besides, the vanity of it all! ' 11

There ~~are~~ affinities of sentiment, but these do not always hold. While there is much in Marcus that is echoed in Shaftesbury, there are also differences. At the personal level, Marcus's misanthropy contrasts with Shaftesbury's emphasis upon sociability. In philosophy, Shaftesbury advocated as an aid retreat to the country, away from the crowd, but Marcus thought that peace and reflection ought to be obtainable in spite of the presence of the crowd. Marcus had to live out his public role, whereas Shaftesbury's was lifted from him, albeit not altogether in the most desirable of ways, but some relief from an unwelcome burden he did get.

The form of Shaftesbury's notebooks does not suggest that he set out to put down Shaftesburean Meditations, but rather that his treatment was topical (life, the end, etc.), and the philosophical debt lies with Epictetus, but that having been said, the significance in understanding the entries in the notebooks lies in appreciating at least some contribution as being made by Marcus.

In this way, by reference to philosophical and quasi-philosophical statements that appear in the Meditations, the sort of contribution that Marcus made, is suggested.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the second major influence on Shaftesbury, namely the Stoicism of Epictetus, it may well help to have a fuller appreciation of the character of Shaftesbury's notebooks at this time. These take the form of small books, quarto in size, into which Shaftesbury entered his thoughts and those of Marcus and Epictetus, upon particular topics as mentioned above. To illustrate, he identifies: Natural Affection, Deity, The End, Good and Ill, Shame, Mankind and Human Affairs, Passions, Simplicity, Self, Life, Ideas and Philosophy. Having put such a title at the top of his page, Shaftesbury would usually mark down a reference or quotation from one or both of these Stoics, and then write out his ideas, the result being sometimes a near translation, and at other times, rather different from the original. At the end of a page, Shaftesbury would turn to the first or nearest page in the book that remained as yet unused, mark down the preceding page number, and continue on the fresh page. A rough and ready sort of an index was added, but the design shows that there was little thought of making use of the notes for any other purpose than the writer's own use. Occasionally, a little more is known in that Shaftesbury sometimes inserted the date and place before the entry.

The notebooks are personal documents and reveal a considerable amount about the author of the Characteristics. They are on occasion highly self-conscious as if Shaftesbury was unhappy with

the idea of addressing strictures to himself after the fashion of Marcus, and unhappy that he should be so self-conscious about such a thing. The fact that he persevered and did not subsequently destroy the notes suggests an exceptional commitment in one who does not appear in these notebooks as overly self-confident.

In order to counter some of this feeling of self-consciousness Shaftesbury argued for the necessity of philosophising in this manner. His two objectives emerge as the wish to be good, to live a good life, and the desire for freedom from disturbance in a psychological sense. Clearly, this is not what is brought to mind when the term philosophy is used in Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century. In order to confirm himself in his pursuit of his philosophical discipline, he brought before his mind the notion that it should not really amount to very much or concern him personally, what others were thinking of him.

The question of practical philosophy is discussed after this fashion, in the parts in which Shaftesbury writes of Reputation and Shame. The attention that Shaftesbury gives evidences the serious degree of concern that he was prepared to exercise, but despite the times that he argues for his indifference, it is difficult to be convinced. In fact, the more he pretexts, the less convinced the reader becomes that Shaftesbury achieved the sort of immunity from the criticism and opinions of others of which he writes. This heightened sensitivity may have arisen through his childhood experiences at Winchester where he had suffered from the taunts of schoolfellows, following the political failure of his grandfather and the subsequent reaction.

At the end of these notebooks, in a short but undated note, headed 'Citations', Shaftesbury looked back upon this personal experience, at the formative influences, in a manner that suggests that any account that played down the influence of the First Earl, would be incomplete as an account of the mind of the third Earl, (and the significance of the political elements need not be discounted):

'For taking the whole of birth, education and circumstance, ...remember only what thou hadst been without such a Gdfather to lay the foundations of thy education? without such times as made thee awake, and early sensible of public good? without such troubles after thy Gdfather's decease and thy falling into other hands? Without the kindness of thy Gdfather's friends yet living in those times, and encouraging and exhorting thee? Without the happy acquaintance of thy good friend and ruler of thy youth in the wildest and most voluptuous days? without thy happy breaking from Courts, by being broken first with the Court of Holland, and afterwards with King William and the Court Whigs? in fine without thy first and second retreat, and study in Holland and all the providential deliverancies inward and outward?...' 12

At other times he is not always so pleased with his previous circumstances, referring to the 'shamefull Nauseouse idea of a Deity' with which he was brought up, and whose influence he still felt. The general burden on the personal side is however, the search for control of self. The two following passages may serve to illustrate this:

'Rotterdam 1698.

How long wilt thou continue to abuse thyself?
Remember that thou hast now no longer any time
given thee but that if hereafter thou shalt
again relaps; the thing cannot but prove fatall.

thou hast given way. thou hast felt and repented. how oft hast this been! and yet still thou hast engag'd, still sallyed out, and livd abroad, still prostituted thyself and given thy Mind to Chance, and the next corner, so as to be treated at pleasure by everyone, to receive impressions from everything, and Machine-like to be moved and wrought upon, as if there were nothing that rul'd within, or had the least control. At length, thou hast retir'd. thou art again in possession of thy self and mayst keep so: being to come, as it were into a new World, free from former engagements and Tyes, unless of thy own accord voluntarily and officiously thou renewest them and art willing to begin where thou left'st off. Know therefore that when thou returnest to the same objects; if presently thou art seized after a certain manner, if thou admitt the least degree of that former commotion, and art tempted into the least feeling of that sort; all is lost, thou art overpower'd and canst no longer command thy self...' 13

And again, in a second volume, we find a later entry:

'Holland 1703/4

'Ever remembering this, premising this carrying this still along with thee, at all times, hereafter, now, this moment, in what thou art now doing, writing exercising studdying, real exercising, not a Cheat to abuse thyself; not fine Thoughts to improve in conversation: nor the wretched Pomp and Fucus of Meditations, even with self: much less for others, or with a thought towards others, as seeking a discharg, Evacuation, Vent, ...Wt a Distemper is this? Wt a Habitt? ..Vile! Vile! ...this would be to degenerate again as a while agoe. For then was this truly that vile Thing, that Bile, Crudity, Vomit, Flegme. Take care thou return no more to this vomit, this odious habit of mind. the animal-impurity is not half so vile...'14

13. Ibid.

14. PRO 30/24/27/10. Second Notebook.

Such passages as these call to mind the phrase of William James, 'the sick soul'.¹⁵

Shaftesbury was a mixture of arrogance and doubt. The self-doubt has been shown in part in these quotations, the arrogance emerges in his dismissal of the opinions of others as shallow, wrong-headed.

The Stoic philosophy could easily emerge with an apparel such as this arrogance presents. The Stoic was superior enough to perceive what others could not perceive, he saw the divine purpose of the universe whereas his fellow humans were unconscious pawns acting out the will of the Deity. This reading can be supported from some sources, particularly Marcus in his more misanthropic moods, and the attribution of arrogance to Shaftesbury, though a natural enough manifestation in one educated to an elitist viewpoint, may be modified to some degree by adding that it was part of his studies at this time, and may not have been entirely a character trait. In Epictetus, there is little arrogance of this kind.

Of course if the notebooks represent deliberative purgative efforts by Shaftesbury he may well have exaggerated what he saw as his failings. Marcus, who was not unprepared to be self-critical if he thought the occasion warranted it, does not appear so repetitively critical as Shaftesbury. The reason for Shaftesbury's

15. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (Glasgow: Collins Fountain Books, 1977). The Gifford Lectures delivered at Edinburgh 1901-2. Lectures VII and VIII. F.H. Heinemann, 'The Philosopher of Enthusiasm' Revue Internationale de Philosophie VI, (1952): 294-322. Heinemann uses a setting of James' analysis to describe the religious character of the psychology of Shaftesbury at this time.

behaviour may be seen as being cathartic. He wished to rid himself of earlier beliefs and prejudices which he thought had occasioned his behaving in a manner that he did not like, possibly characterised by false enthusiasms. Among such forms of behaviour we may include the extreme views on politics, Country and Whig, which had caused him to oppose the Ministerial Whigs in 1696 or near that time, and to side with the Junto Whigs to the extent that he did in 1701. It was not, I think, that he regretted his principles but rather the way in which they had presented themselves.¹⁶

The notebooks were personal and philosophical. Returning therefore, to the philosophical aspect which has so far been touched upon in the setting of classical understanding and the writings of Marcus and Seneca, we may remark that the comprehensive nature of Stoic philosophy as described by Cleanthes, had been eroded somewhat by the time of Epictetus and Marcus. The concern was mainly with ethics at this time. There was an outline cosmology, or account of the universe and its purpose, a principle motif of which was the emphasis laid upon order. But, principally the concern was with conduct, and that in a society which was generally regarded as mildly hostile. Epictetus appears as more of a philosopher than Marcus Aurelius, though this is hardly surprising. Imperial duties were

16. There is some suggestion that after his trip to Holland in 1698 Shaftesbury returned to England professing the character of a philosopher, slightly ostentatiously, and his subsequent zeal and involvement contrasted with the detachment that he had professed, resulting in his view, in some loss of face. This was probably in 1699-1700, but a visit to Holland had been planned much earlier in 1691 which, if it took place, would put this out of phase. There is evidence only of the intention to make such a trip, PRO 30/24/20/3 Shaftesbury to Furly, 27 June 1691.

more unavoidable and time consuming, than those of some slaves, although Epictetus was far from being the uneducated person that the term 'slave' usually brings to mind. Moreover, having been a slave, he was concerned to press the cause of freedom, perhaps rather more than other Stoics.

It is not difficult to tell that Epictetus was educated from his references back to the works of Chrysippus, or to the other philosophies of Greece, particularly the Epicurean. We are not then, dealing with a successful moral teacher of the first century, whose activities just happened to have been recorded, and to have survived, and to have struck a particular chord in the soul of the third Earl of Shaftesbury. It is with a fairly competent philosopher, familiar with his subject matter, who laid emphasis upon its practical aspect, that we have to deal.

Shaftesbury, in addition, was familiar with the works of Diogenes Laertius, and his Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, and was therefore competent to set the teachings of Epictetus in their wider context, namely of the traditions of Greek philosophy and of Stoicism in particular. He was aware of the role played for instance in philosophy of cosmology, of accounts of the origin and working of the universe, but aligned himself with Epictetus in playing down the significance of such knowledge. This view of what we might now call 'natural science' seems to have been an early development, as evidenced by the letter to Locke of 1694, and was reinforced by his developing his reflections and discipline upon the base of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus in 1698-9 and 1703-4.

Epictetus, as a Stoic, encouraged the pursuit of Autarky, of

self-sufficiency and independence, and as such Stoicism must be seen as individualist, (but not possessive individualist). Material possessions and such 'externals' Epictetus deprecated, writing that they tended to hinder rather than to help in the pursuit of the peace of mind that derived from not being subject to the will of others. The independence from changeable influences, which exacerbated the human condition in an unstable world, was not to be found in retreat. This last was a position argued for by Epicureans, a school to which the Stoics were opposed. The symbol of the Stoics was the Stoa, the colonnade inside the city, the symbol of the Epicureans, was the garden, a place connoting more retreat from the world.

Epictetus is concerned, amongst other things, with the problem of getting the right attitude to life, getting the mind right, or with socio-psychological adjustment. It appears that his students, apart from a series of dilettantes, went to him because they were dissatisfied with their way of life and looking for an alternative. Epictetus presented such a one that was not easy, which included study of certain texts of Stoicism, but also of 'lectures', of talks given by him and preserved as the Discourses. Here he used the techniques of persuasion rather than those of rigorous demonstration. Accepting that reason, the governing principle of the mind, was therefore of fundamental importance, we can look at what Epictetus had to say about it:¹⁷

17. Stoic philosophy of mind went from (i) Sensation (cf. Sense-datum); (ii) Presentation (the image of reality in the mind, 'ideas' of the correspondence or picture-theory sort); (iii) Apprehension at which stage the idea was grasped, seized or, as we might say, understood in its significance.

'Every art and faculty makes certain things the special object of its contemplation. Now when the art or faculty itself is of like kind with what it contemplates, it becomes inevitably self-contemplative; but when it is of unlike kind it cannot contemplate itself...Well then, for what purpose have we received reason from nature? For the proper use of external impressions. What then, is reason itself? Something composed out of a certain kind of sense impressions. Thus it comes naturally to be also self-contemplative. Once more, what are the things that wisdom has been given us to contemplate? Things good, bad, and neither good nor bad. What, then, is wisdom, itself? A good. And What is folly? An evil. Do you see then that wisdom inevitably comes to contemplate both itself and its opposite? Therefore the first and greatest task of the philosopher is to test the impressions and to discriminate between them, and to apply none that has not been tested.' 18

In addition to the centrality of an active and self-critical reasoning faculty which we must exercise, Epictetus stressed that things were under our control or not under our control. Those outside our control he referred to as 'externals', and included amongst them wealth, and in the last analysis, health.

There were theoretical weaknesses in Stoic epistemology. Epictetus does not seem to have regarded their solution as his main task, although he was aware of them. Here, his teaching purpose overcame his desire to search for the truth of such matters. He wrote:

'...only the man who has the power and the leisure should devote himself to these studies; while the man who is trembling and perplexed and whose heart is broken within him, ought to devote his leisure to something

18. Epictetus, I, XX. Rather doubtful on the logical side, Epictetus is arguing that we should treat our ideas or impressions after the manner of coins, treating them by testing them before accepting them.

else..' 19

In addition to a discounting of natural science, there was also a common feature between Epictetus low-key treatment of opponents and Shaftesbury's willingness in the Characteristics to leave important arguments, such as the discussion upon the certainty of self and others, to the speculative, as being inconsequential to his main points.²⁰

The Stoic view of relations in the physical world, although of lesser importance to Marcus and Epictetus, aside from their main purpose, needs to be prefaced with an observation of logic. Stoic logic was hypothetical rather than categorical. In the case of Shaftesbury, this needs to be pointed out, not because he afforded great attention to the physical nature of the earth or the universe, although he did use metaphor quite considerably. It is important because, in seeing Stoicism as an influence, and as a critical influence upon Shaftesbury, it is necessary to present the Stoic account of nature, before we can further compare it with Shaftesbury's.

Although the early Stoa, Zeno, Chrysippus and Cleanthes, had developed a fairly full account of the nature of the universe and the basic principles at work, Stoic thought inclined towards an emphasis upon relations and connection rather than upon individuals and universals. Categorical logic, more familiarly Aristotelian logic, was quantity, or class, based. In consequence, the sort

19. Ibid. I. XXVII. He is discussing the criticisms of the Pyrrhonians and the Academy.

20. Characteristics, ii, 277-8

of questions that were asked tended to be those about the qualities of an object, and the answers that were given met these criteria (e.g. man is a featherless biped.). Hypothetical logic, tended instead to focus upon relations. Rather than being of the form 'All A's are B, C is an A, therefore C. is B', the Hypothetical logic tended to assume the form 'If A then B, A therefore B'. Leaving aside the rather interesting technical points, the result of such an approach might be described by the following: The Stoics, remarking upon the dog, the creature, might choose to define it, to characterise it, not in terms of other dogs, (All dogs are ...etc) but to define it with reference to the animal hierarchy, or the wider hierarchy of beings, by which a dog would be characterised by its domesticity, for example, a notion which may seem unfamiliar. The consequence is significant in that because the Stoics did not always ask and seek to answer the questions that attracted other philosophers, it is not always justifiable to assume lack of interest or ability when Stoics fail to ask the questions which might be expected, or to seek to answer questions that attracted other philosophers,

or to seek answers to questions which seem to present themselves.

In the Stoic account of nature events tended to be considered relationally. In physics, this 'If A then B, If B then C etc..' found its intellectual home in determinism. Although not always insistent upon the point, Marcus for example, tended to see as a central feature of his notes the identification of the purpose of

Marcus Aurelius with the purpose of the universe.

The Stoics thought that the universe was ordered. It evidenced the necessary signs of being so. The question that they, and others, addressed themselves to, therefore, was, what was the nature of this order? on what principles was this order based? The Stoics argued against a mechanistic materialism. Matter itself was an insufficient basis upon which to base a complete explanation of the universe. Motion or Mutation, mentioned above was brought in, and helped to fill out the explanatory model. In fact, with a material substance and a motive power, the Stoics shared much in common with their contemporaries. However, difficulties arose over the nature and origin of the motive power, variously called 'spirit' or 'force'. The Stoics saw that as a dynamic it needed more than mere mechanism, and gradually, to a certain extent in pre-Stoic times, the idea of a life-force which permeated the universe, sometimes called 'Breath', emerged, which would go beyond the push-pull system of mechanist explanation. This Breath which was identical with , or instigated by the Divine, controlled change in the universe, and becomes identified with the Universal Mind in a pantheistic way.²¹

In the time of the early Stoa, the origin and end of the universe had been thought to be in fire, all things beginning in fire, and all ending in an embracing conflagration. However, the later Stoics, whilst not unaware of such ideas paid less attention

21. F.H.Sandbach, The Stoics (London:Chatto and Windus, 1975) Chapters 4 and 5, pp 69-99

to them, concentrating upon practical ethics instead. The physics of the Stoics are significant in that on the one hand, they provided the basis of an explanation of an ordered universe, and on the other they related this order to an idea of divinity.

In respect of their idea of an ordered universe, the Stoics reflected the ideas of Plato, especially the ideas in the Timaeus²² although something of Plato's ideas would in turn have been derivative, as from Heraclitus.²³ Shaftesbury would also have been acquainted with similar ideas though Cudworth's Intellectual System where such thinking was reviewed.²⁴

The ultimate principle being God or Divinity, which expressed itself ^rthrough the unfolding of the purpose and substance of the universe, the Stoics found various ways of expressing as an idea. They used Zeus, Providence, Fate, Soul, Reason, Mind, Breath, Master-Faculty, and God. Frequently used was the idea of Mind-fire. In that the divinity was thought to act through matter, to permeate it and cause it to change, rather than to be detached and act in a Deus ex Machina way, and in that divinity was sometimes identified not merely with the power that conceived the universe, but also with the active power that ran through the universe, the Stoics can be seen as pantheistic, their God being immanent, in all created things. Later, the appearance of theism rather than of pantheism, by which

22. Plato, Timaeus and Critias, translated with an introduction and an appendix on Atlantis, by H.P.D. Lee (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), pp 42-45, passim.

23. Sandbach, op.cit., p 74

24. Patrides, op.cit., pp 288-325

God moved less in the world and took up the sort of supervisory role, being before and above the universe, led to a more readily familiar idea of the Deity.²⁵ The Shaftesbury link is through the demonstrable power of nature and the Argument from Design, that is found in the *Moralists*, where it is not uniformly clear whether it is Nature or the creator of it that is the object of veneration, or whether indeed they can or should be separated.²⁶

In writing about human behaviour the later Stoics implicitly assume that the behaviour of the majority of men is undesirable, that they are Fate's unwilling material, at odds with the divine purpose, to be used whilst remaining unconscious of the forces that use them. In both Marcus and Epictetus, the therapeutic purpose of philosophy, vis a vis society, can be seen. In the context of the philosophical pressures or persuasions that had acted upon Shaftesbury, and of the differing degree and direction of his commitment in politics, this assumes significance. It may be said that Shaftesbury too is using philosophy in order to settle intellectual and emotional turbulence brought about by Society.

Moreover, in Epictetus there is a concern with the social context of philosophy. Although stressing the limitations of that which is in the control of the individual, Epictetus frequently resorts to examples that show his awareness of social pressures upon

25. Epictetus, I, XVI, and II, XVI. may be taken as examples.

26. Shaftesbury's contemporaries and one of his associates, John Toland, are considered in M.C. Jacob, The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720 (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1976) Chapter 6.

his listeners. He writes, for example, of going to Rome: of office holding; of preparing for the games and he touches upon the changing social situation of freed slaves, especially those who were promoted by favour. In pointing to the follies of mankind, the Stoic may have left himself open to the charge that this could hardly be shown to demonstrate an effective Providence, (that could have ordered matters better, or made men less prone to do foolish things), and to the further charge that for one who had achieved a degree of the desired Autarky, he showed himself markedly concerned for matters about which he should have been indifferent. Epictetus escaped the last charge on the grounds that as a teacher it was his task to seek the best means of getting through to his students, of identifying the sources of their discontents. The first question as to why the world was not ordered better, or man's part in it, could at least be vexed on the question of the freedom that the divinity had chosen to give the individual, without which man would be closer to the animals. These are problems which are as it were, on the negative side of doctrine, but they are significant in that they show the limitations, in appearance at least, of Stoics' thinking, as well as the areas at which they made contact with the society in which they lived. This made them more acceptable to Shaftesbury, whose purpose was not solely personal but also public.

Epictetus pointed to what was later to be known as cosmopolitanism. Self-interest and social interest were the same. Epictetus changed the terms somewhat from that with which we are familiar. He changed the definition of society, so that self interest became identifying and following the rule of providence, or reason; and

society, defined not as mere Roman or Greek or Athenian, but as the society of the whole world, which was anyway acting out the part assigned to it by the divinity, could be identified with ~~that~~ providence. The idea was to attune oneself to the divine providence, whose will the human race, consciously or no, willingly or no, was fulfilling, thereby identifying purpose in self and society.

One of the major points that Epictetus returns to frequently, is the distinction between what is in a man's control and what is not. Reason is that which is under ~~man's~~ control:

'...That one (faculty i.e. Reason) which contemplates both itself and everything else. And what is this? The reasoning faculty; for this is the only one we have inherited which will take knowledge both of itself - what it is, and of what it is capable, and how valuable a gift it is to us - and likewise of all other faculties. For what else is it that tells us that gold is beautiful? For the gold itself does not tell us. Clearly it is the faculty which makes use of external impressions. What else judges with discernment the art of music, the art of grammar, the ~~other~~ arts and faculties, passing judgment upon their uses and pointing out the seasonable occasions for their use? Nothing else does.

As was fitting, therefore, the Gods have put under our control only the most excellent faculty of all and that which dominates the rest, namely, the power to make correct use of external impressions, but all the others they have not put under our control. Was it indeed because they would not? I for one think that had they been able they would have entrusted us with the others also; but they were quite unable to do that. For since we are upon earth and trammelled by an earthy body and by earthy associates, how was it possible that, in respect of them, we should not be hampered by external things?' 27

In fact, for a distinction that is so important to Epictetus, there is surprisingly little evidence of its appearing in Shaftesbury at this time. In the former it is almost a rubric, but in his follower

Shaftesbury, it hardly seems significant. This might suggest that Shaftesbury had in mind a particular function, the cathartic has been suggested, which it was the part of Epictetus' philosophy to fulfil. On the other hand, there is a case to be made for saying that Shaftesbury was so very familiar with such a basic idea in the work of Epictetus, that the particularity of it becomes obscured by the more immediate considerations - the personal extrapolation. The last seems most probable.

Another key idea in Epictetus was his use of 'moral purpose' in his discussion. There might here be a connection with Shaftesbury's own 'moral sense'. Unfortunately, Epictetus is not always clear in his use of 'moral Purpose'. Basically, the psychological input, as it were, is sense impression, from which by using the moral purpose, by exercising moral choice, we can assign their proper valuation to these impressions, which may be good, bad, or indifferent. Thus Ethics or even philosophy, becomes a matter of the correct attribution, on the one hand in order to secure peace and tranquillity of mind, and in order to identify with the purpose of the universe; these two objectives being seen, as mentioned above, as but two aspects of the same thing. The idea that moral choice is exercised through such an appeal to a quasi-psychological construct, means that it is not too far from Shaftesbury's appeal to moral sense. Shaftesbury's moral sense is usually viewed as an additional faculty of sense, of the order of sight, taste, hearing, touch, and smell. It may sometimes be regarded less rigorously as 'intuition' (the appeal to moral sense being an appeal to intuition) but as an explanation this merely delays the argument one

stage, since intuition is then explained in terms of faculty or some other psychological framework. If anything, the basis of the two ideas is similar but their practical implications would be that moral sense refers more to the individual judgment, whereas moral purpose, as something that can be trained and should be cultivated, is marginally less insular, insofar as it can be influenced by our view of the world around us.

The limitations of Epictetus as a man of learning in philosophy, have been hinted upon. He was by no means unaware of technical questions as we have said, but he preferred to stress the importance of practice in philosophy rather than of learning. It was this practical bent that made him seem attractive to Shaftesbury in 1703/4. On an earlier visit, Shaftesbury had familiarised himself with the ideas of the Stoics, with the teachings of Marcus Aurelius and of Epictetus, and appears to have returned to England secure that he would not again suffer from the disturbances to his peace of mind that had beset him before. In fact, having made something of a display of his philosophical stance, he appears to have embroiled himself in contemporary events to a greater degree, than ever, and his views to have become less robust. In the second part of the notebooks, he is therefore emphasising Epictetus because that philosopher more than any other stressed practice and training, and philosophical discipline.

A further way in which Epictetus appears as being specifically helpful to Shaftesbury in the period with which we are concerned, mainly but not exclusively, 1703-4, was in his view of the possibilities of philosophy. He tended to view with some doubt the pros-

pect of improvement in most individuals. According to Stoic criteria, the man of true virtue, the sage, was distinct from the merely very good, so much that the last was all that most could ever hope to aspire to. Epictetus himself, would not have thought of himself as a sage. However, he did think that there was a role for those who studied philosophy, beyond the cultivation of moral purpose, and in general terms of behaving well. This role involved teaching others, and was in a sense Epictetus' own labour and justification.

The Stoic was to try and help others toward self improvement. This could not of course be done without the assistance or consent of others. The philosopher and teacher would devote himself to expressing the will of the divinity. There was a little of the spirit or will of the divinity in all men. Once the philosopher had identified with the divine intention, had aligned his life with that of the universe, then the philosopher in living, and setting an example, and teaching by example, could express that intention.

In thus telling of a higher code of conduct, the Stoic will let others know, that in a corrupt and limited world, it is possible for the individual to harmonise his conduct with the divine purpose, which will be fulfilled in any case. For the individual, the attraction of such a view must be that in a world which is a source of deep-rooted unease,..... the usual Greek phrase being a reference to a stream which flows without tranquillity it is possible to learn by instruction and practice, how to carry the load, how to pass though life with the minimum perturbation from such unease.

The possibility of the teacher setting an example offered one course of future action to Shaftesbury. It would permit him to play an important part whilst maintaining a distinction between the world of events, the externals, and his own mental and moral world. The role of teacher could act as a substitute for a man who no longer had any recognisable or readily acceptable public role.²⁸

Epictetus also focussed his attention upon two concepts which seem to be of particular relevance to Shaftesbury, and his interests as shown in the notebooks. The first of these Aidos, may be translated as Shame. This had been noticed in the list of headings in the notebooks, but may be especially remarked because it presents a less familiar aspect of 'moral philosophy' to the modern mind which, perhaps, is drawn more easily to studies of happiness. Shaftesbury used Shame without compunction, perhaps even over-compensating, in his attempts to cleanse his soul and mind of those 'Vile, Vile' thoughts and practices with which he thought himself beset. Shame is also something that we feel, we have a sense of shame, which like Epictetus' moral purpose is not entirely passive. This may be remarked not in a particularly technical way, for it was not especially important to the later expression of views by Shaftesbury, but simply to indicate that the

28. Although this account inclines to make Stoicism appear really rather gloomy, it may be added that Epictetus was at pains in the Discourses to set out a fair balance of allurements and exhortation to make his teachings effective. In terms of the adept, those who persevered, such initial incentives would be unnecessary, virtue as they say, being its own reward.

conception that is more familiar, of a passive sense of shame, does not entirely serve to encompass all the aspects of the ideas that were being operated with at this time and in this place. It is more akin to modern expressions of 'guilt' although one could presumably bring shame to work ('Have you no shame...') in an active sense, which the more recent emphasis upon 'guilt feelings' tends to discount. In this particular notebook period, Shame was an important topic.

The second concept which Epictetus seems to have focussed upon was that of Pistis, the relation of the inner man and the outside world. This was brought in because it was clearly a possibility that the Stoically inclined might choose to opt out of the active life and become a recluse. The Stoics were not of this kind, believing that a man must remain in the world, whilst detached from it, at the 'Porch' or on the pavement of the Collonade that surrounds the city square. Pistis eludes translation but embraces Reliability, Loyalty, and Helpfulness. As such, it would in all appearance have had some considerable appeal to Shaftesbury, who was later to emphasise the 'social' (sociable) philosophy. In fact, it is one measure of the Crise de Conscience which the notebooks suggest that Shaftesbury was in at this time, that there is little reference to this aspect. Even the idea of teaching does not appear, Shaftesbury appearing to emphasise that it is himself that he is concerned to put to rights. It may be suggested that this social aspect, and the teaching aspect were implanted at this time, or perhaps earlier, but that they were for the present overlaid and remained dormant.

Proceeding towards our conclusion concerning the character and kind of influence that Shaftesbury derived from his Stoic studies such that he was, in part at least, prepared to promote the Characteristics upon such a basis, it may be repeated that from Marcus Aurelius and from Epictetus, he derived an intellectual as well as a personal and psychological foundation.²⁹ It may not be without significance to remark upon the ownership of Stoic books by the third Earl. In his Catalogue of the Greek and Roman Books in the Library at Chelsea, 1709, he had listed no less than ten different works or editions which contained some part of the Discourses or the Encheiridion (often separately printed at this time) of Epictetus, and about the same proportion of variant reading of Marcus Aurelius's Meditations.³⁰

29. The intellectual importance of the Stoic influence has been discounted by one of the main authorities on Shaftesbury. Stanley Grean in his Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics (USA: Ohio University Press, 1968) p 7, argues that the Stoic element has been overemphasised. The evidence of the notebooks suggests that while Stoicism was indeed a very present help in time of trouble, it was also the basis of Shaftesbury's philosophy. However, to shift to the philosophy of the Characteristics means to appreciate the distinction between private thoughts and public thoughts, and the intention here is to show that the complex fusion of sources to which Grean has alerted his readers, can be to some extent, separated out: into the educative influences of the early years; the cultural ideas of the time of the Grand Tour; the beginnings of his own expressions; the scio-political ideas; and the Stoics. There is also the use of Horace to which attention is given briefly below. These were the inputs, but not all were of equal significance, though the expression of some influences in the Characteristics would suggest that Shaftesbury conceived a purpose for many of the ideas or ways of thinking that he had encountered. Grean's book, and the article by Tiffany cited above both rely on Rand's edition of the notebooks in his Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury, rather than on the MSS themselves.

30. PRO 30/24/23/11.

The Stoic account of Nature, the emphasis upon a relational account, and upon an active principle in Nature, in the world, have been noticed. However, their importance lies also in the fact that they were in opposition to a school of thought, the Epicureans, with whom Shaftesbury also found himself in disagreement. Undoubtedly, there was a Cambridge Platonist element in Shaftesbury's opposition, but the case for a role, at least an important supporting role, can easily be made for Stoicism.

The Epicureans, followers of Democritus and Lucretius, accepted that the world was not governed by an organising principle, but that it was rather a question of Chance and the chaos of atoms. On a weakened position, they would have argued for a non-active originator of the world, a first mover who having done his part, played no further role. Shaftesbury, as we have seen, had early found this to be unacceptable. He had criticised Hobbes for failing to give an account of sociable instincts in his mechanistic account of human nature. This charge had been laid to the door of Epicurus by Epictetus:

'So also Epicurus, when he wishes to do away with the natural fellowship of men with one another, ... makes use of the very principle that he is doing away with..'31

Epictetus argues that propositions which are true and evident must be employed even by those who deny them. Then he goes on to show that Epicureans who stress the selfish aspects of man's character do so from unselfish motives. Clearly this has links with that others

31. Epictetus II, XX.

including Shaftesbury, alleged against Hobbes' account of human nature, namely that if man was so self-interested wherein lay the benefit for one such as Hobbes in disabusing man of his illusions?³²

The attack upon the Epicureans was carried forward on many fronts. It was alleged that they contradicted their theories by their practice, that they were a social menace, weakening the moral fabric of society by undermining traditional senses of loyalty. Epictetus particularly concentrates upon the attack on man as a social being which he seeks to refute.

'Even Epicurus understands that we are by nature social beings, but having once set our good in the husk which we wear, he cannot go on and say anything inconsistent with this.' ³³

In contrast to the Epicurean, Epictetus stresses what Shaftesbury calls Natural Affection, I.E. fellowship, companionship, family feelings and sentiments.

It may be noted that the response to Epicureanism is couched in terms of behaviour by Epictetus, and later by Shaftesbury, that the argument is one of morals, rather than emphasising the problems associated with an Atomic physics such as Epicurus had taken from the tradition of Democritus. ³⁴

The immanence and pantheism which is to be found in Stoic thought and in both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, is also to be found in the notebooks of Shaftesbury, particularly the discussion of Deity.

32. Ibid; where Epictetus presents Epicurean views, including the one that the Gods do not exist, or if they do, are indifferent to the problems of men.

33. Epictetus I., XXII

34. The contrasting types of physics between Stoic and Epicurean may be compared in brief in Ferguson, op.cit.,

This religious aspect, firmly embraced within the physics of Stoicism, and representing a Stoic alternative to atomism, represents for Shaftesburean philosophy the ultimately most significant contribution from Stoicism, the religious part.

Shaftesbury, we have said, had two large quarto notebooks in which he put down his thoughts. In 1704 he prepared for his return. He had been abroad nearly a year. For his journey back to England, he prepared a synopsis of his thoughts, and in particular of those which he wished to keep very much before his mind, a Shaftesburean *Encheiridion* or Manual. This justifies the suggestion that the study of Stoicism was not an indulgence of a few months, an aberration from normal equanimity, but truly envisaged, as Rand calls it, as a Regimen, a practical programme. This more convenient notebook, drawn up for the trip consisted of sheets of vellum, some four inches wide folded and stitched together to make a small book.³⁵ The brief entries reveal that Shaftesbury was still determined to follow through with his philosophical practice. Moreover, they show that he was still concentrating upon himself and his problems, and not at this time rehearsing statements that might be regarded as fit for a later work such as the Characteristics.

The philosophical practice that he set down involved three stages of reflection upon the events of each day, and a two-part 'Adoration', both parts of which were to be performed at night. In a sense this may be seen as not unlike the religious devotions of a monastic order, though the basis was, of course, quite different.

35. PRO 30/24/27/11.

Shaftesbury would have regarded monasticism as a feature of the dark ages, before reason and philosophy had emerged once more from behind the dominant forms of scholasticism and superstition.

The daily routine that he envisages is less distinctive. He notes that he must keep control of his temper, make use of stock responses in conversation in order to achieve this control, and prevent himself from becoming over-excited. He uses a phrase which may epitomise what it was that he had in mind to achieve: 'Whole character revers'd'.

The marginalia have references to Marcus and Epictetus, suggesting that Shaftesbury may have been as familiar with them as contemporaries were with their Bibles. A particular example, which shows the religious aspect well comes from the Discourses:

'Now when someone asked him how a man could be convinced that each thing which he does is under the eye of God, Do you not think, he answered, that all things are united in one?..do you not think that what is on earth feels the influence of that which is in heaven? - I do, he replied.- For how else comes it so regularly, as if from God's command, when He bids the plants flower, they flower, when He bids them put forth shoots, they put them forth, when He bids them bear their fruit, they bear it, when to ripen, they ripen, when again He bids them drop their fruit and let fall their leaves and gather themselves together and remain quiet and take their rest, they remain quiet and take their rest?..But are the plants and our own bodies so closely bound up with the universe, and do they so intimately share its affections, and is not the same much more true of our own souls? But if our souls are so bound up with God and joined together with Him, as being parts and portions of His being, does not God perceive their every motion as being a motion of that which is His own and of one body with Himself?

... He has stationed by each man's side as guardian his particular genius,- and has committed the man to his care - and that too a guardian who never sleeps and is not to be beguiled. For to what other guardian better and more careful, could He have committed each one of us? Wherefore, when you close your doors and make darkness within, remember never to say that you

are alone, for you are not alone; nay, God is within,
and your own genius is within....' 36

In order to secure the benefits of this religious identification with an immanent Deity, Shaftesbury recorded that he was to forbear in other areas. Some of these we have noticed as part of his daily rule. On a broader front, he discounted the appeals of politics and the public life. He notes that the last time that he had become involved with public affairs he had done so because of appeals to family. This relates to his activity in early 1700 and up to the death of the King in 1702. There had been an earlier attempt to embrace Stoicism and practical philosophy, probably in 1698-9, and the limited nature of the achievement at this earlier time, may have helped to make Shaftesbury doubly determined to ensure that he made a success of this second attempt. This may have involved placing an emphasis upon avoidance of public concerns which was neither necessitated by the Stoic philosophy, nor intended as a lasting philosophical attitude by Shaftesbury himself.

This was recorded in a note to the effect that affairs of the public were affairs of the past:

'Senate, Cabinet, Field (Military Civil)
Elections, Interests, News, - down all & Silence, Ignorance
'tis past the farewell period. Alm August 22 1704.' 37

36. Epictetus I., XIV.

37. PRO 30/24/27/11, Page 1. 'Alm', I believe referred to the Almanac for 1704, which Shaftesbury may have used as a Diary. It does not appear to have survived. A marginal note refers this entry to 'Voiton at Hochstett' (uncertain reading), suggesting the location of Shaftesbury when he made such a resolution and suggesting also that he did not remain in or near Furlly at Rotterdam for the whole period he was abroad, 1703-4.

Again in the realm of personal conduct, Shaftesbury insisted that he must not only seek discipline of the mind, thereby retaining control of temper and avoiding the enthusiasms to which he thought himself prone, but also the discipline of manners. Recalling the Fops of Bath, about whom he had written to Locke, and the stock characters of Restoration Comedy, may assist in understanding his strictures:

'None of those dissolv'd loose Manners, actions of a body .. Faces, Shruggs, Noises, Fawnings, Gruntings, Struttings..' ³⁸

Among these notes and jottings are some signs presumed to be Cabalistic from their appearance, although since there is marked individuality amongst such, the code which an 'Adept' may have put to Shaftesbury remains obscure. (The drawings are few, but sufficient to rule out idle doodlings.). ³⁹

This then was the personal and intellectual plane along which Shaftesbury appears to have been moving during the crucial phase of development in 1703-4. Subsequently, after he went on board ship to return to England, Shaftesbury was subjected to hardship as the vessel was blown off course, and Shaftesbury himself suffered from a bout of fever which left him permanently disabled, and from which his recovery was slow and hesitant. The impact of this subsequent illness, and his return amongst friends in England upon the application of the philosophical rule which he had set himself, must re-

38. Ibid.

39. This aspect of Shaftesbury remains in need of investigation vide. Margaret C. Jacob, op.cit., Chapter 6 and passim.

main a matter for some speculation, although it seems possible that some moderation of the rigour he had at one time envisaged was introduced.

The fact that Shaftesbury owed much to his readings of Stoic philosophers has not been denied since Rand published the 'philosophical regimen'. There have been arguments about how much he owed to Stoicism, and reference to different opinions has been made. Since Rand's editorship extended to extracting some of those parts that appear to set Shaftesbury in a less favourable light, qua philosopher, and to omitting them, there is a need for setting out some of them as we have done here. However, there is sufficient material in the MSS notebooks to provide for differing scholars. In the remainder of this chapter, attention will be given to the Stoic philosophical vision, to the view of man and society, and to the relation of their thinking to Shaftesbury's. In this area, the ideas that are explored preface the discussion of Shaftesbury's attempt to socialise philosophy in the Characteristics.

It seems particularly important that the idea of philosophical vision which was important to Shaftesbury's contemporaries Locke and Berkeley, empiric and idealist, to Shaftesbury himself in the notebooks should have been of considerable interest to the Stoic thinkers. 'Philosophical Vision' is a phrase which may be taken to embrace a dual purpose. On the one hand, it refers solely to the technical aspects ~~of the~~ embraced under the philosophy of perception. On the other hand, it has reference to the converse of this, the purpose revealed by concern with the way in which man perceives things, which very often is to lay new emphasis, or to put across a new

interpretation, as to what man ought to be seeing, perceiving. In this latter sense we can talk of a Hobbesian world being competitive, a Marxist world, one marked by the conflict of class, and so on. This wider sense of philosophical vision is clearly important for one who hopes to set his own view of the world to right, and to one who hopes to present a world-view that can be recognised and accepted by others.⁴⁰

The Stoics were as much interested in adjusting man's perception of the world as they were in providing an account of that world. This seems to have been particularly true of those who wrote at the time of the early Empire and whom we have already encountered, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. Their interest lies in their provision of a means and method of providing an interpretation for an existing situation. They are not especially concerned to radically redesign the map of knowledge but to make their reader, (or listener, or self,) look at the world in a new way without the benefit of additional information. In this they are similar to the early Shaftesbury, who saw that new discoveries in the world would not serve the purpose that he envisaged for philosophy. Naturally accounts of Stoicism tend to suggest, or emphasise what was unique to their thinking, ideas such as have been touched upon already. This means that the less unique, the less philosophically interesting tends to be overlooked. A reading of the works of Stoic

40. This is not to say that ~~at~~ this time Shaftesbury had it in mind to publicly set out his views, nor that that was the purpose of his major work, in which this particular vision or world view was but part of a wider purpose.

thinkers, such as these three, points as much to a concern with teaching and persuasion as it does to 'cash-concepts' in philosophy. So there is an important shift here, between the purpose and method of the Stoics, and the residue of philosophical contribution. This is not confined merely to Stoics, but also features in the history of thought generally, being part of a wider problem of focus.⁴¹

The notebooks of Shaftesbury are of crucial importance in comprehending what he was trying to achieve, what was the basis of his philosophy. Later, the directness of Stoicism he diverted by employing techniques for presentation which were derived from Horace and other writers. The earlier imperatives of the notebooks are not for the public. Stoicism however, suggested a way of looking at the world, of moving from the macrocosm to the individual and from the individual to the macrocosm. This may have been method as much as anything, although the relational logic of the Stoics in the earlier times, implanted a tendency to approach matters in this way. Shaftesbury inclined towards the same technique. This is the wider philosophical vision of the Stoics.

An example may be given of this Stoic approach. In Epictetus, the link of man and society is for the most part, not through man's membership of a particular town or city, but through the whole community of men. This may be contrasted with the view of Plato's

41. If we move the focus of our attention and interest to history of ideas, rather than history of philosophy, to the history of the social context of ideas, the history of expression by man, of culture, then different aspects are going to seem significant.

Academy as a training school set up in reaction to the evils of Athenian Democracy. The Academy, viewed in this light, had an important social function in Athenian society, it could be defined in terms of part of the political make-up of Athens. In Epictetus, we can find little like that. Perhaps this was because of the effective totalitarian aspect of the Empire. The idea of a school for sick souls at Nicopolis being the seed-bed of reaction seems distinctly improbable. Although there were earlier Roman Stoics, Posidonius and Panaetius, and some associated with opposition to government by Emperor, this does not appear true of those studied by Shaftesbury. Moreover, the denial of the importance of material possessions, as being ultimately out of a man's control, would tend to run counter to serious political activity.

The Stoic is a citizen of the world: a judgment on the macrocosmic level, surely. Similarly, the suggestion of egalitarianism, is the result of universal reason (all men...) rather than of radical politics. Epictetus emphasises the importance of freedom in the individual, and as an ex-slave, it is not unreasonable that he should do so. Marcus Aurelius appears to acknowledge the idea of a universal brotherhood of man, whilst practically sure that he had no equals, and that his courtiers were a source of aversion. Again, a certain bi-focality, between the individual and the universal. Epictetus, in his less benevolent moods, seems to have held out little hope of his listeners ever graduating to the degree of tolerable human being.

The urge toward looking at the same facts in a different way is perhaps best seen in the Discourses, where Epictetus is concent-

rating upon the process of philosophical revaluation:

'Where then is progress? If any man among you, withdrawing from external things, has turned his attention to the question of his own moral purpose, cultivating and perfecting it so as to make it finally harmonious with nature, elevated, free, unhindered, untrammelled, faithful and honourable; and if he has learned that he who craves...the things that are not under his control can be neither faithful nor free...; and if, finally when he rises in the morning he proceeds to keep and observe all this that he has learned; if he bathes as a faithful man, eats as a self-respecting man, - similarly whatever the subject matter be with which he has to deal, putting into practice his guiding principles, as the runner does when he applies the principles of running...., - this is the man who in all truth is making progress, and the man who has not travelled at random is this one.' 42

The way in which we look at things is changed not by further information, but by disciplining our minds. Epictetus especially lays emphasis upon training and application. He thought that by these means a man could gain control over his judgements of external impressions, over his moral purpose, and achieve independence from the world of appearances and deceptions. The position of the philosopher and good man was not dissimilar from that of the musician. The latter has certain innate powers, or skills, but these have to be made use of, to be trained, if a skilled musician is to emerge. So it is with the moral man. Another analogy that Epictetus uses is that of the athlete. In Shaftesbury's Characteristics this practical side to philosophy is to be found, particularly in the treatise, Soliloquy: Or Advice to an Author.

In terms of the social implications of this, it seems that the individual is being asked to appraise his society in terms of its

42. Epictetus I., IV. Compare also IV.1. passim.

'fit' with the divine purpose. On this basis there might, for example, be a case for natural religion in a social sense, the worship of a Supreme Being. However, the onus seems to fall in identifying those areas in which man in society was devoid of such naturalness. The institution of slavery, was not calculated to enable the individual to make the most of that divine part of his nature, his reason; and thus, it could be seen as against philosophical and moral principles. Broadly, however, it seems implicit that Marcus Aurelius, and the listeners of Epictetus, had already formed their judgments about the nature of their respective societies, and the ways in which those societies worked, and that this judgment was not favourable. The emphasis upon change tends to lie in changing the individual rather than in anticipating, or working for, ~~any~~ change in the social order. In this sense, theirs was a non-revolutionary philosophy, a counter culture in which, within the existing framework, an elite might hold different opinions to the prevailing orthodoxy without thereby committing themselves to actively working for the overthrow or destruction of that orthodoxy. This, too, we shall meet in the Characteristics.

The Stoic concerns of Shaftesbury in Holland, especially from 1703-4 were perhaps the most radical and thorough-going immersion in philosophical ideas that he had, as yet experienced. The personal aspect of his studies at this time, even if we allowed for the exaggeration of a mind under pressure, points to a greater personal commitment than we are able to find at earlier periods. Moreover, there is throughout this time, a greater sense of direction, a sense that Shaftesbury went to Holland, and despite psychological pressures,

went with the intention of pursuing a rigorous Stoic revaluation. The notebooks do not present a picture of a man casting about in philosophical waters in search of a suitable haven for an unsettled mind. They represent a man who knew just where he wanted to get to, but who seems to have doubted his staying power.

It does not seem surprising therefore to find that Shaftesbury emulated the Stoic Cleanthes and prepared his own Hymn or Prayer. He addresses the 'eternal parent' of the universe, whom he calls the **author** and sustainer of the universe. Shaftesbury's personal Deity was not a mere prime-mover without an active part to play in that which he had created. He writes:

'Since by thy will, I was made a creature capable thus to know and contemplate Thee, let it be my thought and study how to follow Thee... Let such therefore be my care of this principal part: thus to preserve and to cherish this eye of the mind by which alone (whilst it is unblemished) we are able to keep sight of Thee; and which neglected and grown cloudy, looses us that inestimable view, and leaves us to wander in the horriddest of darkneses..... O Thou, who through a cloud of darkness, has brought me to this free discernment, and hast set me in this clear and happy light, let thy mighty image in my mind and a right sense of Thy goodness, and of the excellence of this high advantage Thou hast bestowed, support me in the work of making myself a worthy spectator of things so goodly to contemplate: and not only a spectator, but an actor, such as Thou wouldst have me to be in this Thy theatre...' 43

It is with the nature of Shaftesbury's performance as an actor in the world of letters, and its relationship to the wider world of English and West European society, that we shall be concerned in

43. PRO 30/24/26/7 Item iii. Of particular interest is the intellectual approach, the spectator image and the idea of being an actor. C.f. F.H.Heinemann, 'The Philosopher of Enthusiasm', loc.cit.

treating with the Characteristics.

CHAPTER FIVE.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HORACE TO SHAFTESBURY.

The brief notes of the notebooks, and the personal rule of philosophy based upon Stoic principles, are not readily recognised in the style of the Characteristics. Shaftesbury may by the latter part of 1705 have solved his philosophical problems on a personal basis, have found at last the intellectual haven that had eluded him in earlier years, but he lacked at this time the techniques that would enable him to translate these principles into a form which would prove acceptable to the readership to which he wished to communicate his ideas. This chapter is concerned with looking at this problem. The argument presented is that Shaftesbury's earlier writings show that he was uneasy with form, as he was with ideas, both philosophical and political. In consequence, Shaftesbury needed a model upon which to draw, which would act as the stimulant and guide to his own creativity. This model was found in the writings of Horace and what they represented to Shaftesbury is considered. As was the case with Stoicism it is possible to see that the analysis works on different levels, that Shaftesbury saw Horace and his life at the time of Augustus, as not analogically dissimilar from that of himself under Queen Anne, or the previous monarch, William; and that on another level, Shaftesbury preferred the oblique, less biting, wit and irony in the satire of Horace, rather than, say, Juvenal, and that he employed this kind of satire in the Characteristics, - in contrast to some of his contemporaries who were more abrasive. In the context of the development and presentat-

ion of 'socialised' philosophy, we have considered some of the specific background of ideas, necessary preparatory work before comprehending the full significance of the question 'what' was in the Characteristics?', and in this chapter we are concerned to present a case to answer the question 'How did Shaftesbury try to achieve the presentation of his social and philosophical criticism?'. .

The significance of Horace has not been entirely unnoticed. Grean has written of Horace as being one of Shaftesbury's most quoted authors, and of the Roman poet's measured irony embodying Shaftesbury's ideal. He also notes that a study of the use of Horace by Eighteenth century English writers has failed to grasp his importance to Shaftesbury, but is not prepared ~~to~~ inclined to develop the subject matter himself, possibly because the Horace-Shaftesbury relationship stands upon a shared method rather than . a shared basis of ideas. The significance of Horace and his method should not be passed over so readily, for Shaftesbury's work was appreciated almost as much for its presentation and advocacy of a style of reasoning, for its politeness, as much as for the ideas which it embodied. ¹

Shaftesbury's early writings, the Preface to the Select Sermons, the Paradoxes of State, and the Adept Lady's Sect (1702) together reveal the different approaches that Shaftesbury may be said to have experimented with. The unauthorised Inquiry Concerning Virtue, is probably close enough to Shaftesbury's original to be regarded

1. S.Grean, op.cit., pp 6, 126 and Note 6, p 267.

as his rather than as Toland's, and may be regarded as coming from this same period. The Preface deals with ideas, but insufficiently develops them, and inclines to be circuitious. The Paradoxes of State argues rhetorically, and by order of proposition or paradox, emulating a more formal method. The Adept Lady's Sect, adopts the form of the moral epistle about a narrative, with the emphasis upon the latter. The Inquiry of 1699, has been described by others. Shaftesbury said that it had been brought into the world against his wishes, 'an unshapen Foetus, or false birth' with 'a disguis'd disorder'd Style'. A recent edition of the Inquiry adds :

'The Toland edition is coarsely and carelessly printed; orthographically it is antiquated and crude; there are no marginal titles, no footnotes, no variations of print face; the paragraphs are excessive in length and the sentences interminable; the style is appallingly repetitious, cumbersome, undisciplined and wholly lacking that polished lucidity and epigrammatic elegance for which Shaftesbury's writing is rightly famed'.²

These early writings do not suggest that Shaftesbury had nothing to say, but rather that he had not always the requisite ability with which to develop his ideas, or certainty as to the effectiveness of his means of communication. He did not, for example, think that

2. Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit. ed. David Walford (Manchester University Press, 1977) Introduction, pp x-xi. The citations from Shaftesbury are taken from p.x. Walford himself does not appear to have come off entirely unscathed from his publisher and printer. A critical edition reduced to an introduction and appendix is, at best, unfortunate, and additional slips by which Shaftesbury's printer Darby becomes Darcy can only have irritated the editor, already the subject of 'economy'.

people could be preached into becoming more good, but that they might be laughed into so doing. Clearly the Preface to a selection of Sermons presupposed that his audience was mostly determined beforehand, - that he was not aiming at the 'wits' of the town. Similarly, the life of a political pamphlet is not usually regarded as being of long duration. In part, the search for a new manner of presentation, for a new form or new style, involves a reappraisal of the audience, or market at which the writer is aiming his work. This aspect is important for appreciating the significance of Horace, and the question of audience is one to which we shall return. There was a tradition of "imitating" or modelling upon the works of Horace, among English writers before Shaftesbury. Among notable exemplars of this practice, were Robert Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy, and Sir Thomas Browne in Religio Medici. Closer to Shaftesbury's times, there were the poets Milton, Cowley and Dryden.³

An additional impetus in Shaftesbury's case may have been the historical attraction of a writer who would have been able to tell him of the early Empire prior to Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. It would seem improbable however, that Shaftesbury came to Horace by this means, but rather that being familiar with Horace as part of a classical unbringing, he returned to the Roman poet having a notion that in his poetry he could find other expressions of that philosophy upon which he had more recently concentrated his

3. Caroline Goad, Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century, Yale Studies in English, No. 58, (New Haven. U.S.A. 1918).

attentions.

A further line or tradition that would have inclined a man of letters, or one who aspired to be such, toward the Roman poet existed through the traditions of French literary criticism, and particularly that of Boileau. Shaftesbury later became acquainted with the French literary theorists who were at this time dominant in the world of letters.⁴

There were then, several approaches to Horace open to Shaftesbury. There are also several reasons for Horace's being attractive to men of education and culture at this time. Most superficial, but most frequently resorted to, were those epigrammatic statements that made Horace eminently quotable. Shaftesbury's Characteristics have such citations, the first being at the title page of the first treatise of Enthusiasm. A further attraction for contemporaries was that Horace did not rigidly embrace one doctrine but was seen to be 'living at the interstices of doctrine'. Peter Gay, whose phrase this is, believes that the men of Enlightenment tended to be superficial in their usage of Horace. The truth of the general statement may remain unquestioned although there is a case to be pleaded, as we shall show, that an exception he made in

4. This area has been discussed in the work of R.L. Brett, The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: Study in Eighteenth Century Literary Theory. (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951). This contains much information and presents an account of Shaftesbury and his aesthetic and literary ideas. It probably remains the 'conventional wisdom' on Shaftesbury in an English publication. This study seeks to identify what Shaftesbury was trying to achieve, where Brett's study focuses rather more upon the achievement itself. As such, they are different ways of looking at Shaftesbury, and afford differing perspectives.

the case of Shaftesbury.⁵ A third attraction lay in the neatness and concision of Horace's use of literary forms. This was his technical ability, which sometimes rescued familiar sentiments, much as Pope's Essay on Criticism found its virtue not in originality of idea, but in skill of presentation. Horace used discourse which was neither esoteric or vulgar, he appealed not to the idealist but to the practical man with a head for ideas, and he advocated moderate and sensible rules of conduct, by poking fun at extremes. Shaftesbury drew from both the ideas, the questions of philosophy, but also he drew from the criticism of manners. Clearly Horace meant different things to different individuals, and what was to the taste of one, might not be noticed by another. This being so, it is necessary to look at what Shaftesbury had to say about Horace, before looking to see whether his appreciation was just, from what angle he viewed Horace's work, and whether Shaftesbury did indeed have a more than superficial appreciation of Horace.

Although Shaftesbury refers to Horace in the notebooks, his comments were not always favourable:

'Again then...What was Opinion or Fame in those Early days, when Honesty not succeeding either with relations or with the Party, thou gavest that matter up and turning Epicurean (with Horace and his Odes) follow'd Pleasure, Witt, Air, Mirth, Humour? What was a Rumour or a Censure at that time?'. 6

5. Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation Vol. I, The Rise of Modern Paganism, (London: Wildwood House, 1973) Book I, Ch.3. pp 162-3

6. PRO 30/24/27/10 Part 2. Opening remarks, dated Holland 1703/4.

Horace at this time was associated with an early failure in philosophy, possibly with the period 1699-1700 when Thomas Freke had felt it necessary to remind Shaftesbury of his duty to the public and when his parents had been having difficulties in their relations.

Yet within two or three years of writing the above, Shaftesbury found himself able to give more favourable account of Horace in a letter to Pierre Coste. Writing to Coste^t, he mentions a translation of the work of Horace by a Frenchman, Monsieur Dacier.⁷ He argues against the translator, claiming that Horace's professions of religious sentiment in the Odes were genuine. Shaftesbury speaks of the significance of the idea of a man's 'genius' or guardian, in the religion and belief of the Augustans. Epictetus had, of course, used this same idea. The view of genius also occurs in the notebooks and in the Characteristics.

In October 1706, Shaftesbury developed his views of the life and work of Horace. He separates the career of Horace into three stages. The first stage is the period of the poet's education at Athens where he came under the influence of Commonwealth ideas from the followers of Brutus.

'...The first period is that which I call his original free republican state. His friend and patron at this time was Brutus, who was head of the cause, and who raised him to the command of a legion. His philosophy was suitable thereto; that of Brutus, the old genuine Academic, or as Cicero says, the downright Stoic; that of his uncle Cato; that of Laelius, Scipio, Rutulius, Tubero, and almost all those commonwealth men, as

7. ? Dacier, Les Oeuvres d'Horace traduites en Francais...par M.Dacier, (Paris: 1691) 10 Vols.

well as of the new ones, Thræsea, Helvidius, Soranus and the rest in after times...' 8

The philosophy of Brutus and the other downright Stoics is said by Shaftesbury to be the social and civil philosophy. He contrasts it with the views taken up by Horace after the defeat of Philippi. At this juncture Shaftesbury sees Horace's philosophy to have been thrown away with his shield at the battle. The contrary philosophy which he adopted, in reaction, was closer to the Epicurean, the selfish and anti-social philosophy, a particular feature of which was its denial of an active part for the individual in society and politics. The philosophy of the Garden had supplanted that of the Collonade. (It was this that Shaftesbury had accused himself of indulging in before 1703/4.) This view argued against the ordering of nature and the universe by an Intelligent Principle, and against a natural distinction between Right and Wrong. This latter philosophy was descended, he continues, from Democritus and Epicurus. It was the philosophy of the Court of Augustus, and Shaftesbury concludes, it represents Horace's second stage, his 'debauced, slavish, courtly state'.

The third stage says Shaftesbury, soon followed. The Epicurean philosophy of the Court was not sustained by the poet for long:

'The slavish objects, the servile ties, the abandoned principles and manners, the parasitical tables..., all these, into the midst of which he was now got, and in which he had served more than seven year's apprenticeship, began to work heavily on his nature. And hence arose his third and last period, viz., his returning or recovering state, and his recourse to his first philosophy and principles, sorely against Maecenas and the

8. Rand, p 355. Shaftesbury to Coste, 1st October 1706.

Court's desire, who would have kept him in,
and did all they could to do so, but in vain..' 9

Shaftesbury says that the first period of philosophy never received written expression because Horace was not at that time a poet. The second phase is more adequately documented, by the Odes. The last stage is better expressed in the Epistles.

How then does this interpretation stand against that of a more recent commentator?¹⁰ Fraenkel argues that Horace developed an interest in Greek writers during his period of further education at Athens. He had not, at this time, ~~contemplating~~ ^{contemplated.} the future in terms of his being a poet. His recruitment into the army of Brutus was part of a general upsurge in favour of Brutus and his party by similarly placed young men in Athens. An unusual feature about Horace joining the army was that he was not of sufficient social status to be put in command of a legion. This is explained away by the facts that Brutus would have preferred loyalty to uncertain experience. After Philippi was lost, Horace may have rejected his principles along with his shield although it is unlikely that he did so in a literal sense. Fraenkel suggests that there may have been an element of redressing the past, in Horace's later account, written under the rule of Augustus.

The impact upon Horace of the defeat of Philippi was that not

9. Ibid., Shaftesbury's italics.

10. Eduard Fraenkel, Horace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) Ch.1, Vita Horati. As a matter of interest Fraenkel refers to the work of M. Dacier, as being 'nowadays unduly neglected' fn.p 5. Shaftesbury said he had looked 'into Monsieur Dacier out of a kind of insulting malice, to see how he, with his court models of breeding and friendship...' Rand p 355.

only did the defeat bring about the collapse of the cause for which he had fought, but also its ideological termination. In personal terms Horace lost both prospects and possessions, as the victors were rewarded with expropriations from the lands of the defeated. From 42BC to 38BC, from Philippi to the general amnesty Horace must have been hard pressed and forced to come to terms with some unpleasant economic realities. However, near the time of the amnesty Horace obtained, by purchase in all probability, an office in a department of State, loosely equivalent to the treasury. It was Virgil who about this time introduced Horace to Maecenas, and thereafter Horace became poet and companion to Maecenas. The relation of poet and patron was not uneventful but was unbroken until the death of Maecenas. In his Will, the Patron had requested that Horace be looked after by Augustus, but Horace was dead within a few weeks of Maecenas, a matter of speculation emerging as to whether he had died naturally or by his own hand.

Horace adopted self-deprecation as the means by which he could decline particular tasks set before him by his patron or by the Emperor. He wrote of his relations with Maecenas, as if the statesman had more sense than to talk of affairs of state to a mere poet and travelling companion. He declined to write in praise of Augustus, but did so on the grounds that he had not the full range of skills that would be necessary, praising him, as it were obliquely. Fraenkel thinks that toward the end of his life Horace was in fact closer to Augustus than Shaftesbury suggests, the

11. Fraenkel, *op.cit.*, p 53 suggests this was about 41BB.

latter thinking that Horace retired to his farm physically and intellectually. Fraenkel does not see Horace as cleverly eluding the obligations that the Court was anxious for him to fulfil. The Fraenkel interpretation, in less political, and 'independence' is a question of the poet's necessary autonomy. His Horace is politically adept, capable of holding his own and manoeuvring in the political waters of the Court of Augustus.

Shaftesbury's Horace stands in contrast as a man of principle, rather than a skillful technician in literature. Shaftesbury uses his framework of Court and Commonwealth/Country as an explanatory framework for making Horace appear less opportunist and less Epicurean than his own views would support. He sees Horace as someone temporarily seduced from the true philosophy into the Epicurean, as a dependent upon the Court. The Court he associates with moral decadence, luxury, and corruption, all features which appeared in Country thinking.

The personal analogy in this Shaftesburean account is not difficult to trace. It is so clear that it seems almost transparent, and we may conjecture that Shaftesbury may have thought of himself in these terms. Although there seems no evident reason why he should address such comments, if they were nothing more than a concealed description of his own career, to Pierre Coste. The personal analogy runs from Shaftesbury's early career in the Commons when he appears to have been of the principles of the Whig/Country party, and during which time he witnessed the eclipse of that tradition with the emergence of Harley and the New Country Party. Shaftesbury then passed some time outside the active body

politic before returning as a Whig Peer, helping to justify the Whig Lords, fighting two elections on Whig principles, and retiring only after further eclipse. Thus, for Shaftesbury Philippi came twice, or once but in two stages, before he was driven to accept retirement, and the 'break' with the Court became a rationalisation. Ironically, if this were so, Shaftesbury was unfortunate enough to be setting himself in a position from which he could censure his contemporaries as Horace had done, at the very time when the Whigs were beginning to emerge from the political wilderness. Doubtless Horace could provide examples and models for Shaftesbury to emulate as he criticised the age without criticising the Court, or Whig ministry, on the other hand, this suggests that Shaftesbury elected to conduct his criticism on a less political plane because of the changing constitution of the ministry in England.¹²

The politics of Stoicism conceived in cosmopolitan terms as in Epictetus, would be hard to translate into ^a pattern of politics of the early 18th century as seen by Shaftesbury. Horace provided such a key. Through this interpretation of Horace's philosophic and political conduct and beliefs, Shaftesbury could link Stoicism with Commonwealth ideas, Epicureanism with the Court.

12. The Whigs did not make an effective recovery at one time, but by stages they progressed, from 1705 to 1708 to their fall in 1710. In 1706 the pendulum was still swinging in their favour and Shaftesbury while willing to criticise the Court abstractly would have been hesitant lest such criticism be conceived as an attack upon the Ministry.

Since Shaftesbury was able to view Horace's defection to the camp of Epicureanism and the Courtiers, with magnanimity it may not surprise us to find that he extended the same kind of appreciation to his contemporaries, a notable defector being Robert Harley. Shaftesbury had argued for Harley early in 1702, and did so on later occasions. The notebooks suggest that his magnanimity was not always heartfelt.¹³

The main thrust of Horace for Shaftesbury lies in the Roman's being able to show that it was possible to criticise society without appearing to radically undermine it. Shaftesbury perceived in the techniques of Horace, through the Odes, Satires and Epistles, the means by which he himself could play an active part before the public. He found in the detachment and humourous irony employed by Horace, a road which he could follow. This road would enable him to reach and influence a wider readership than that of the political pamphlet or book of sermons. Horace had demonstrated too that the work could live after the man, a fact which doubtless encouraged Shaftesbury to proceed by a changed approach. His earlier efforts had clearly not achieved sufficient impact for this timelessness to be achieved.

In Horatian satire, Shaftesbury perceived an opportunity which he realised in his plea for raillery and banter, for the freedom of wit and humour, an opportunity for criticism without

13. PRO 30/24/27 'Citations' Shaftesbury reverses a quotation from Dryden's Don Sebastian, as a self-exhortation when 'angry at the failings of others or the Apostasy of friends'
'Had I been tempted so, so had I fall'n
And so had be been favoured, he had stood'.

being abrasive.¹⁴

However, such technical skill is not to be acquired at will and throughout the remaining years of his life Shaftesbury was concerned with style and with form. The Characteristics illustrate his concern with form, as he tried the moral epistle, the essay and the miscellany. The Second Characters show that he was still concerned with such problems to the end, and in particular with concealing his own views behind a critical attitude, so that the ultimate principles could only be perceived by those capable of discernment. Horace acts as a model and stimulant but Shaftesbury is not content to imitate, but rather seeks to adjust the Horatian method to his own purpose.

It would be erroneous to suppose that Horace provided the inspiration for Shaftesbury's focussing his intellect upon moral problems and contemporary society. His concern had shown itself before he began to study Horace seriously. The means by which this concern might best be expressed were to be found in Horace. Shaftesbury thought particularly of the Fables, such as the town mouse and country mouse, which Horace employed.¹⁵ Shaftesbury himself wrote a political fable, The Fable of the Oaks, the Pines and the Pinasters, which may be seen as an allegory after the manner of

14. Dryden had perceived this possibility in satire:

'Our last Redress is dint of Verse to try;
And satyr is our Court of Chancery,
This way took Horace to reform an Age

Not bad enough to need an Author's rage;
in 'To my Ingenious Friend, Mr Henry Higden, Esq., On his translation of the Tenth Satyr of Juvenal' (1687). The Poems and Fables of John Dryden, ed. James Kinsley, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) p 351

15. Quintus Horatius Flaccus, (Horace), Satires Epistles and Ars Poetica translated by H.R. Fairclough (London: Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1929). Satires II.4. 91-117.

Horace. It focussed upon the ~~sign~~^{sign} of the Courtiers, the attempts by Anne or William to do without one or other of the great parties.¹⁶ A final similarity may be mentioned and that is that both Horace and Shaftesbury found in their fellowwriters, a source upon which they could draw when they wished to depict less happy a picture of their contemporaries. While Horace named his targets, Shaftesbury was content to point to the writings of the men of the cloth generically considered.

During the period after his return from Holland in 1704, until three years later Shaftesbury may have been at work preparing the early parts of the Characteristics, serving his literary apprenticeship. The work of Horace, and Shaftesbury's account of him, may have had a catalytic role to perform in this setting, enabling the transition from the private speculations of the notebooks to the wider social criticism of the earlier treatises. The lesson was still incomplete, as Shaftesbury sought to develop more skill in mastering language and style. He began to study literary criticism seriously and to follow the prescriptions of the leading authorities. Horace's function had been performed, although the Second Characters reveal that he was prepared to maintain the Shaftesburean interpretation of Horace in later years.¹⁷

16. Among the Shaftesbury Papers there is also The Fable of the Wise Puppy - PRO 30/24/30/78, which I have thought unlike Shaftesbury's performances, particularly in respect of the moral. The moral here is that a man may serve his country honestly, and yet know how to set a price upon his services and be served in his turn.

17. Rand, Second Characters or the Language of Forms, pp 175-6

What then was the sort of passage of Horace that Shaftesbury had in mind when he thought of the Roman poet as an adherent of the true philosophy? The following passage, from one ~~of~~ the Epistles, may serve as an example:

'To cut men's throats, robbers rise up by night;
to save your own life won't you wake up? Nay, just
as, if you won't take up running in health, you'll
have to do it when dropsical; so, if you don't call
for a book and a light before daybreak, if you don't
devote your mind to honourable studies and pursuits,
envy or passion will keep you awake in torment. Why
indeed are you in a hurry to remove things which hurt
the eye, while if aught is eating into your soul,
you put off the time for cure until next year?
Well begun is half done; dare to be wise; begin!
He who puts off the hour of right living is like
the bumpkin waiting for the river to run out: yet
on it glides and on it will glide rolling its flood
forever.' 18

CHAPTER SIX.

THE WRITER AS SOCIAL CRITIC:

THE LETTER CONCERNING ENTHUSIASM.

In the space of about fifteen years Shaftesbury had had to come to terms with prevalent thought-styles, with none of which he was entirely at home, both in philosophy and in the socio-political world. These have been identified in outline. Towards the end of this period he had reacted strongly to uncertainties that had been engendered in his mind, - the term 'nervous breakdown' might not be considered inappropriate, - but, in consequence he had formed and practised his own philosophic commitment. This was based upon the Stoic tradition, and in particular that of the early Roman Empire. From this base he was able to reassess with some security, what it was that he perceived in his own society, in particular in the society of the well-bred, the politically eligible, of men secure in the possession of property and position, that had troubled him. He was able to present an ideological attack and an alternative to prevalent views on man, society and God.¹

1. Much of the force of some of Shaftesbury's argument derives from his use of repetition. He returns to a point, even when his criticism is essentially negative, in order that it should not slip his readers' attention. Clearly this is intentional, and for that reason and the fact that Shaftesbury has not been afforded a progressive 'treatise-by-treatise' approach for some years, during which a conceptual approach has tended to prevail, I have thought it useful to chart his progress from critical to constructive thinker in the Characteristics by reference to individual treatises, allowing repetition to bring out some of the arguments, where the supporting rationale might otherwise not have justified focussing attention upon them.

This did not imply radical and thorough-going social analysis of reasons why certain opinions were dominant. Sometimes, as in his secular, historical, and comparative account of religion, there was analysis, at other occasions, Shaftesbury was content to make the pointed remark and leave the inference to his reader. In this and the following chapters, attention will be given to each treatise in the Characteristics in order to illustrate the wide ranging perspective of Shaftesbury's views. It will be argued that Shaftesbury can be seen to be 'socialising philosophy'.

At the superficial level, this means bringing philosophy from the dark cold monastic cell, out into the light of the warm salon. There was, however, much more to the process than the reformulation of current academic thinking, such as might be accepted by the emergent polite society, important though such a reformulation was. Shaftesbury concentrated upon particular areas as well as adopting a panoramic approach. In particular, much of what he said about the English Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, while not reasoned fully, reflected a political standpoint, which saw in the universities, a breeding ground for Tory attitudes. Shaftesbury tried to point to the practical applications as well as to the speculative conclusion. In consequence Shaftesbury's writings work on different levels, only one of which may be thought to be recognisably 'philosophical' in the narrower modern sense of the author's making a contribution to a technical discussion. The different levels of the discussion and Shaftesbury's assault on many fronts, represents the socialising of philosophy, which in its turn represents Shaftesbury's intent-

ion of raising the quality of socail discourse, and of providing guidance as to the areas upon which that discourse could be profitably employed for the individual and his society.

Shaftesbury regarded the earlier treatises of the Characteristics the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm and the Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, as being for the most part critical.² They represented the author's 'sapping' or undermining phase rather than his subsequent constructive period. It seems possible that he also thought that they who could follow the first phase might not be sufficiently discerning to follow the more positive views that he later put forward, at least such a view would accord with his ideas about concealing his own contribution.³

The Letter appeared in print in 1708. In the first printing was a prefatory note, supposed to be from the printer, which implied that the manuscript had been circulating the previous year.⁴ If he followed his customary practice, Shaftesbury would have sent the letter to Lord Somers, with an accompanying personal message. It would appear that upon this occasion Shaftesbury has lent a fair manuscript copy, only to find that it had been borrowed from Somers and subsequently brought to print. Toland may again have been involved. One of the rejoinders to the Letter of the following

2. Hereafter cited as Letter and Essay respectively.

3. Tiffany, op.cit., pp 654-5. It may also be pointed out that the critical phase, by which Shaftesbury hoped to create a more congenial atmosphere in which serious discussions could be conducted, is logically prior to the advancement of a specific train of argument, the 'philosophy of Shaftesbury' in its history of philosophy context.

4. A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm to My Lord ***** London Printed for J.Morphew, near Stationers-Hall. M.DCC. VIII.

year included a dedication in mock form to the gentlemen of the Kit-Kat, a Whig club, which would suggest that the political sentiments of the author of the Letter did not long remain obscure to those likely to know such things. The Letter may, however, have been promoted through the support of the Whigs of the Kit-Kat. The fact that there should be a political element present so early in the history of Shaftesbury's mature literary career need occasion no surprise, and is a point to which we shall recur.

The particular occasion for the publication of the Letter was the activity of a French religious sect in London, the French Prophets and the proposal to punish them by reference to the rigour of the law.⁵ Their primitivist beliefs had excited the credulous and alarmed the orthodox, a situation which their French origins served to make worse.

Shaftesbury may well have had personal experience of such enthusiasms. The unpublished Adept Lady's Sect is concerned with the subject. Had the attractions of the French Prophets been confined to the vulgar, Shaftesbury's interest would possibly have remained unmoved. However, they did succeed in making a few converts among the 'better' part of society, and could therefore be seen as a threat to that society. They provided a starting point for Shaftesbury rather than a focal point for his views. His main concern was that the Prophets should not be made the excuse for a more

5. Accounts of the French Prophets are to be found in the incomplete edition of the Characteristics of the Rev. Walter M. Hatch (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1870) Vol. 1.; and in M.C. Jacob, *op.cit.*, Chapter 7, *passim*.

rigorous application of ecclesiastical law - a threat to the Dissenters and therefore to the Whigs - or threaten to undermine the relative latitude with which the laws had been applied since the passing of the Toleration Act, and the 'Revolution Unsettlement' of the established Church.

To expose this further an appreciation is required of the uncertainty that had prevailed in the Church of England since the Revolution of 1688. The political aspect has been touched upon. The dimensions of the problem were broader than the narrowly political and it is best seen as a social problem, a matter of fundamental social strain. The expression of these tensions almost invariably took on a political colouring.

The ministers of Anne were subjected to a series of forceful demands made on behalf of the established Church. These were not always of the same strength, but seen in retrospect look like tides of discontent that pressed until they helped to sweep the Whig ministry from power after the trial of Sacheverell in 1710; Shaftesbury could easily have been aware of the strength of feeling on the subject of the Church some few years earlier. In one of the replies to the Letter it is clear that the ideal of uniformity, such as Shaftesbury had himself touched upon in the Paradoxes of State, was still considered a practicable idea. The view that the Churches in one country might be perpetually divided had not gained sufficient ground as yet as would make it acceptable as a fact of civil life. There were new heresies such as Deism and Socinianism for the established Church to combat. There was a fashionable irreligion and immorality in society and, particularly associated

with the stage. The dissenting communities and their congregations represented a threat to the provincial parson, as did their having their own educational establishments. These were but some of the directions from which the feelings of a 'Church in Danger' kind, or a church on the defensive from attacks from above and below, came. A social problem, but whose expression, as we have said, was political:

'The essential characteristic of the controversies thus evoked was their close correspondence with contemporary political events. The defenders of the Revolution Settlement were contending, not for the orthodox exegesis of happenings in an historic past, but for the maintenance of a position still fiercely contested, and by no means beyond the chance of reversal. The reigns of William and Anne were pre-eminently the testing of Revolution principles. The generation after 1688 was called, not to garner the fruits of that victory in peace, but to wage unceasing battle for its preservation. The position of Dissenters, apparently secured in 1689, was successfully assailed by the Tories in the reign of Anne, and not finally established until the ministry of Walpole. The doctrines of divine hereditary right and non-resistance reappeared under Anne with pristine vigour, and regained their old predominance in High Church pulpits.' 6

It was against this background, as well as of the specific issue of the French Prophets, that Shaftesbury's Letter would have been viewed by contemporaries.

In entering such an area of frequent disputation, Shaftesbury was putting himself and his friends at risk; a necessary risk perhaps, but a risk nevertheless. Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury

6. Norman Sykes, 'Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor' in The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age, AD 1650-1750 ed., F.J.C. Hearnshaw (London: Harrap & Co., 1928) pp 117-8.

and staunch Whig, had first-hand experience of the force of opposition of a political kind, during Shaftesbury's period. The unauthorised Inquiry may have been partly responsible for Shaftesbury being particularly unwelcome at the Court of the new Queen in 1702, since Anne was strongly inclined toward the established Church of England. The risk, then, was that the Letter would add to, rather than diminish the smouldering discontent of the Church of England parsons and that it might also bring upon Shaftesbury and his associates, in particular Somers whose reputation on the subject of religion was rather suspect, political opprobrium.

On the other hand, the opposition and increasingly High-Flying Tories could not be allowed to have everything their own way. Shaftesbury may have hoped that his approach, an attempt to raise the level of the exchanges from the charge and counter-charge, to the reflective and discursive, to 'socialise philosophy', would effectively contribute to a lowering of the temperature, to a calming of the climate of debate.

Shaftesbury introduces his idea of enthusiasm at the beginning of his work by referring to the custom of the ancients to invoke the appropriate muse at the beginning of their endeavours. More recent writers, the moderns, do not assume this practice with equal facility. On the one hand, he says, they are ineffectual in emulating the zeal necessary because the Gods to whom they address themselves are no longer the true objects of worship in a genuine sense. On the other hand, they derive their enthusiasm for the most part, from other sources, such as the company they keep or the

applause of the audience. Shaftesbury then pays his compliment to Somers, by referring to that statesman's role in place of the absent muse, Somers having been the subject of many dedications of literary works. Shaftesbury refers also to Bishop Fowler, and his belief in fairies, as a contemporary.⁷

Although this is for the most part preliminary material, preparatory to the main discussion Shaftesbury manages in a short space to cover a considerable area, and to set down some of the parameters of the subsequent discussion. He speaks of there being true and false enthusiasm. He contrasts the practices of the ancients and the moderns. He drops hints as to the appositeness of his discussion to the modern man, by demonstrating his awareness of Somers' place in society, and of the beliefs of contemporary eminent clerics. He also seeks to set the discussion upon the social importance of religion and the nature of religious belief.

Two observations may briefly be made. The first is that these topics were by no means original to Shaftesbury or unfamiliar to his readers. A 'best-seller' of a few years earlier had been Swift's Tale of a Tub (1704) whose work, also dedicated to Somers, was such that it had reflected badly upon the Whig statesman, attra-

7. Characteristics i.7.fn. Dr Edward Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester (1691-1714) born 1632, his name was included among the supporters of the French Prophets. M.C.Jacob, op.cit., p 108 passim. Surprisingly, he had earlier been a defender of the Latitudinarians, which makes Shaftesbury's attack unusual. Shaftesbury himself, referred to the 'blundering Bishop Fowler in his answer to the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm' (Second Characters, p 176) which hints that the reply which Fowler wrote to the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm might have taken personally what was not supposed to be taken in this way.

cting comments of 'irreligious' from the orthodox. The Tale of a Tub describing allegorically the formation of the Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Calvinist Churches, had been viewed as an attack on all religion. The contrast between the satire in Swift and that of Shaftesbury is considerable. Shaftesbury's method would be as important as his matter in this well-trodden ground.

Secondly, if we take Shaftesbury's hints on composition in Miscellanies I and II at face value, and do not assume them to be an after-the-event justification, then his method is deliberately contrived, is mannered rather than being the result of an inability to come to grips with his subject matter directly. In this instance, the account in the Miscellanies seems to be true, and Shaftesbury did contrive the opening, conscious of the need to please and intrigue his reader. Shaftesbury argued that the traditional moral epistle, although designed as a letter and intended to be sent as such, was not the spontaneous writing that had come to be associated with letters. He said that 'letters' such as the Letter were meant to be sent but that they were the result of considerable thought and the application technical skill, rather than the outflowings of the moment. Although part of Shaftesbury's wider didactic purpose, as well as being an answer to his critics, Shaftesbury's arguments suggest that the style and method of the Letter were far from being accidental. It is important that we know that the author has chosen the method, rather than had it dictated to him, especially in the case of Shaftesbury in whom the employment of irony heightens the significance of the writer's intention. Historically, it is particularly important, in that there is a

prima facie case for arguing that it was the style of Shaftesbury that drew his readers, rather than the opinions he was expressing so well, and with which they might have felt less happy. The elegance of the writing seems to have been accepted by his early critics, albeit grudgingly.

Shaftesbury takes up his argument by observing the prevalence of ridicule in his society, noting that censure by means of ridicule does not stop short of the bastions of authority, the Court and the Church. Upon this Shaftesbury builds his argument for using ridicule as the test, not of truth, but of the soundness of reasoning upon a subject, and of the subjects being fit subject for a serious and grave consideration. Shaftesbury argues that there is a tendency to be too grave, and thereby prejudice the seriousness of any matter by approaching it in the wrong frame of mind.

Shaftesbury obliquely identifies his opponents who would not have ridicule applied to the subjects of which they are the guardians. He refers to the grave character becoming the formal one, and to the cunning formalists of the age.⁸

The choice of formalists is interesting in that by using this Shaftesbury can non-specifically attack guardians of orthodoxies, the infantry and lesser commanders of the entrenched position. They need not be guardians of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, of course, although it seems probable that this would be what Shaftesbury's

8. Characteristics i,11 (my italics)

readers would infer. He says of them that they can bear being railed at, being harangued but that they are aware that ridicule and banter - persiflags - would undermine their position. Implicit in such a statement is the possibility of Shaftesbury's seeking to change the character of the debate, from battery to 'sapping'

It may be argued whether by this time Shaftesbury has in fact put forward much of a technique for ridicule, since at this point it appears to consist solely in refusing to consider any matter with the same degree of seriousness that proponents of the matter would require. Thus far, Shaftesbury has tended to identify seriousness of discussion with melancholy, a disposition that can be altered by correct but unspecified doses of ridicule. However, he has laid the first stones and chooses not to follow up this particular argument at once but to turn elsewhere first. The sapping method is not to rely upon one line of approach, but to lay several mines that will bring down the citadel.

He shifts the focus of his attention then, to the social dimensions of expressions of enthusiasm. Following his reference to melancholy, he treats of this in medical metaphor: a practice which, it may be said, was not unusual or quintessentially characteristic of Shaftesbury

"There are certainly ill physicians in the body politic who would needs be tampering with these mental eruptions; and under the specious pretence of healing this itch of superstition, and saving souls from the contagion of enthusiasm, should set all nature in an uproar, and turn a few innocent carbuncles into an inflammation and mortal gangrene".⁹

9. Characteristics i, 12.

In its social dimension, such enthusiasm can rapidly become a panic. It spreads from one individual to another without a word, by mere looks. It may be a force for good or evil. The strength of enthusiasm is added to by the effects of association which makes two people more enthusiastic collectively than they would be separately. Religion is but one form of enthusiasm; fear is a strong motive toward panic, which occurs on the occasion of natural calamities, and 'bad times'. In these circumstances it will be the part of the magistrate to allow some of this passion an outlet rather than to insist too strongly upon the letter of the law.

The author points to the necessity for a national Church as a means by which this natural enthusiasm may be channeled, and its course controlled. Shaftesbury says to his audience, that there should be public walks and gardens as well as private ones.

There is evidence enough here of Shaftesbury's going beyond a philosophy of enthusiasm, or a philosophical consideration of the matter, and into reflections upon the character of the times. His audience would be familiar enough with their private gardens. Thus we begin to demonstrate that Shaftesbury's concern extends into society, and in particular to his society, in addition to the accustomed view of his discussion of ridicule as the test of truth.

He argues that too great a degree of control is counter productive. There is a balance to be reached on the matter of such enthusiasms. He cites by way of example the co-existence of scepticism and enthusiasm in ancient Greece. There was conflict between the different sorts of sects, the Pythagoreans, the Platonists, the Epicureans and the Academic, but this never reached

the stage where blood had to be shed. Bloodshed, he says, appeared when the idea of an after-life was introduced, which made men leap the bounds of natural humanity.

The only alternative to this incessant conflict that appeared when man discovered the after-life and started 'plaguing one another more devoutly', is that of uniformity of opinion. Shaftesbury's argument here suggests irony as he refers to this as 'a hopeful project' although we have noted that the idea was not without support from those who seriously believed uniformity might be achieved. In the wider perspective, Leibniz might be numbered among those who sought to bring this about. Shaftesbury, does not pursue this idea, for his concern is more practical, that the magistrate has become too involved with religion.

The magistrate for Shaftesbury meant his fellow country gentleman at the assizes, but more importantly perhaps it meant the government itself. Shaftesbury was arguing for less government involvement in matters of religion. Religion was not, but had certainly become, in a manner:

'...the chief care of the magistrate, and the very end of government itself.'¹⁰

Shaftesbury presents his case against government involvement in the following way. If it were to involve itself in sciences then the end result would be as confused and as bad as some divinity. Government cannot control 'wit', intelligence, and if it can manage to keep people sober and honest that is sufficient for they

10. Characteristics i, 15.

themselves will have sufficient wit to look after their souls. Shaftesbury is not here formulating a political philosophy on the limits of government, on the relation between the individual and the state, but he is certainly dropping a few suggestions as to what he thinks the respective autonomies might be. He is claiming the right for the individual, his reader, to think for himself and believe what he thinks is right. This aspect is developed in the Essay.

Instead of authority acting as the guardian of accepted truths, the individual is to decide for himself. He will be able to do so because he has recourse to the practice of raillery, to the application of ridicule:

'I am sure the only way to save men's sense, or preserve wit at all in the world, is to give liberty to wit. Now wit can never have its liberty where the freedom of raillery is taken away: for against serious extravagances and splenetic humours there is no other remedy that this'. 11

He suggests that other forms of enthusiasm are ridiculed and that therefore there is a case for allowing greater liberality in religion. The other forms to which he refers are love, gallantry, and knight-errantry. He remarks that crusades^d are no longer as popular as they once were. In diminishing the seriousness with which we treat religion, man might diminish the concomitant 'soul rescuing spirit and saint errantry'. He contrasts the probable consequences of the imposition of regulation upon love poetry, which he thinks would be that the countryside would be filled with young people engaging in the practice of poetry. Shaftesbury is not being unduly facetious, although the

serious reader might think him suspect, but is trying to exemplify the good humoured approach as well as to advocate it through argument. He is also concerned to demonstrate that good-humoured approach that he associates with religion, - as opposed to the enthusiasm and superstition that are manifestly the result of the wrong temperamental approach - but, as yet, this remains undeveloped and implicit.

Shaftesbury develops instead the association of bad humour or ill humour and wrong views of religion. Ill humour he says is the only cause of man's thinking that the world is badly run, badly organised, or that it is not organised at all. Earlier he had associated enthusiasm with melancholy; he now associates 'ill humour' - physical or psychological defect or malaise - with unworthy views of the deity, or atheism. For Shaftesbury this is an assertion a matter of fact, perhaps:

'..there are so many arguments to persuade a man in humour that, in the main, all things are kindly and well disposed, that one would think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with affairs as to imagine they all ran at adventures; and that the world, as venerable and as wise a face as it carried, had neither sense nor meaning in it. This however I am persuaded of, that nothing beside ill-humour can give us dreadful or ill thoughts of a Supreme Manager'. 12

Once more Shaftesbury chooses not to follow this point immediately. He selects rather to contrast the gloomier views

12. Characteristics i, 18. This suggests that Shaftesbury's own experiences of illness before 1703/4 may have occasioned such thoughts, and that his personal experience which we have considered earlier is not insignificant in the forming of his views.

that are held as to the character of the dity, with the praise allowed to leading political figures, and then turns this to account by deftly complimenting Somers.¹³

Following this he turns his attention to the cause célèbre, the French Prophets. The Prophets illustrate the strange attraction of martyrdom to the enthusiast, and Shaftesbury argues that they seek to be prosecuted. He contrasts this with the gentlemanly attitude which involves accepting the religion and religious practices of a foreign country. In this it is possible to see some of the direction that Shaftesbury is putting into his work, the wider society of the time concentrating its attentions upon voluntarist movements such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Shaftesbury suggests that to disturb the religion of other countries is neither decent nor fitting. Clearly, however, it was the French Prophets that he had before his mind, rather than the French Protestants of the Cevennes, who might be regarded as equally obdurate and therefore as potential martyr material, by contemporaries. Shaftesbury had indicated his sympathy with the displaced or persecuted French Protestants only two years earlier. They were to his mind an important constituent of the war aims of

13. There are also some associations in his usage which appear through the Letter. For example, Supreme Manager might be construed as quasi-political; as the reference to ministries in the Roman Empire is an example of the use of language current in his times by Shaftesbury, to communicate with his readers. Sometimes this appears deliberate, an attempt to address the discussion to an audience of particular character, at other times it is clearly going to be the result of Shaftesbury and his audience thinking in such terms, and on occasion it will just as obviously be 'half conscious'. The active deliberation over the writing of the Characteristics adds weight to the first.

the allies, and he had hoped that toleration, however minimally, might be extended in France as part of an allied victory. So, in this area Shaftesbury is talking of French Prophets a small sect which had threatened to upset the social order by their enthusiastic practices, and not the influx of French Protestants, or Palatines, whose different religious practices may have disturbed the balance of various persuasions in the capital. Shaftesbury's attitude is predominantly one of good-humoured contempt, which masks his concern with more serious considerations.

By the time that the Letter was written, (it is dated September 1707 though printed the next year), the affair of the French Prophets had not yet run its course.¹⁴ Proceedings against some of the offenders had been contemplated ~~or~~ were under way. Shaftesbury was anxious that the authorities were not going to be too severe.

Shaftesbury's Letter illustrates his awareness of the activities of the Prophets to this time and of some of the reaction that they had provoked, such as their being the subject of caricature at Bartholomew Fair. Shaftesbury then concentrates upon the relation of persecution and truth.

He remarks that the truth of the gospel had been better tested in the early days of the Christian Church if it had been subjected to the tests of wit and ridicule rather than to the doubtful conclusions brought about by persecution. He adds that St. Paul for example,

14. In Dec. 1707 William Wycherley wrote to Alexander Pope: '...In fine, as the new Prophets talk to the whole town, they are the present talk of the whole Town, and pretty numerous already; nay they say they are like to encrease (sic) for the great lawyers intend to persecute them, and whip them; and you know, Sanguis Martyrum, est semen Ecclesiae...' cited from Correspondence of Alexander Pole, ed. George Sherburn, Vol. 1, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) p 35.

had more difficulty with tolerant Athenians than he had with the harsher but more impressionable Jewish fathers. He also points to the attacks in the Greek theatre upon the philosophising of Socrates, and how Socrates had answered his critics by visiting the theatre himself. Shaftesbury's critics were not slow to pick up the eventual fate of Socrates under such an amiable system.

Shaftesbury switches his attention to the nature of religious belief. He argues that good-humour is the correct disposition in which to approach the contemplation of the Deity. This is especially true when consideration is to be given to the character, or as contemporaries frequently said, the 'attributes' of God. In a good-humoured frame of mind:

'We shall then be able to see best whether these forms of justice, those degrees of punishment, that temper of resentment, and those measures of offence and indignation, which we vulgarly suppose in God, are suitable to those original ideas of goodness, which the same Divine Being, or Nature under him, has implanted in us, and which we must necessarily presuppose, in order to give him praise and honour in any kind.' 15

Shaftesbury sets this alongside our practice in religion. We are, he says, too concerned in pleading our own cause. 'We are highly concerned how to beg right.' He condemns the 'wager' by which men will strive to believe in case there is a God, and accept the risk that there might not be. He contrasts this with a human standard of 'divine' conduct:

'To love the public, to study universal good and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as lies within our power, is surely the

height of goodness, and makes that temper which
we call divine.' 16

As mere men, we should like such virtues, had we them in the first place, to be known and acknowledged, but we should not think to harry and persecute those who, through ignorance, failed to give us what we chose to regard as our proper due. Yet this is of course, how we view the vengeful God. How, asks Shaftesbury, can what is regarded as divine in man not be so regarded in the Deity?

This line of approach leads Shaftesbury to turn toward a consideration of moral goodness and virtue in man. This consideration is prior to the attribution of moral qualities to the Deity. Man must find out first what moral qualities he would seek in the best men before he can assign qualities to a God who is better than the best man. Here Shaftesbury's intention seems not merely to make morals separate from religion, but to make it logically prior to religion. Morals is the subject of concern not to the organisation, be it Church or State, but to the individual.

'...if we have never settled within ourselves any notion of what is morally excellent; or if we cannot trust to that reason that tells us nothing beside what is so, can have place in the Deity; we can neither trust to anything which others relate of him, or which he himself reveals to us. We must be satisfied beforehand that his is good, and cannot deceive us. Without this, there can be no real religious faith or confidence. Now if there be really something prior to revelation, some antecedent demonstration of reason, to assure us that God is, and withal that he is so good as not to deceive us; the same reason, if we will trust to it, will demonstr-

ate to us that God is so good as to exceed the very best of us in goodness. And after this manner we can have no dread or suspicion to render us uneasy; for it is malice only, and not goodness, which can make us afraid.' 17

The priority of reason and morals to correct religious belief is not however, fully developed in the Letter. Together with this is a brief argument, which Shaftesbury similarly fails to develop at this point, to the effect that 'ill', evil or malice, develops as the result of the conflict of interest. Since a universal being cannot be opposed by such an interest, there can be no conflict, no malice in the universal being. This argument was taken up in the early part of the Inquiry, but may be remarked here, as being present in brief, and particularly because of Shaftesbury's use of 'interest', a usage familiar to his contemporaries, and especially so in the political world.

The approach so far has been from several seemingly independent sources, as Shaftesbury changes his focus and technique. The construction of an argument upon such a base, or the advancement of an intellectual position, might therefore appear somewhat hazardous. Shaftesbury advances his belief in a Universal Mind. Yet if we recall that one of the ideas of the Letter would have been to introduce ideas to his audience, rather than to develop them in full, then it is possible to understand how Shaftesbury may have thought that he could carry his audience. The treatment in the Letter of the idea of a Universal Mind is essentially preliminary.

This being so, we can tentatively hypothesize that Shaftesbury had in mind a cumulative kind of reasoning for the whole of the Characteristics, but that for individual treatises this approach was not envisaged. The Letter does not start with an assault on a position and then build upon the results, but makes a series of assaults. With such an hypothesis in mind, it is possible to form a better conception of what Shaftesbury was about in his use of such technique, and to form a better appreciation of how he tried to achieve his purpose.

The Universal Mind argument is rehearsed. There are, for Shaftesbury, two categories; firstly that there is a Mind, in which case, it is the best that can be; or there is not a Mind, in which case, man must console himself with the reflection that there is no malice in nature, for then there is no mind to be malicious. The former position, he says, seems to be more desirable.

He then puts in an ironical reflection that this might not seem to be the case if the present state of religion is considered. At present, people appear to be more afraid of there being a God than of there not being one.

'...as religion stands amongst us, there are many good people who would have less fear in being thus exposed, and would be easier, perhaps, in their minds, if they were assured they had only mere Chance to trust to.' 18

Shaftesbury's chief concern is to get across the idea of a kindly well-disposed divinity, not to indulge in prolonged argument about the idea.

18. Characteristics 1,29.

In order to reach this idea, Shaftesbury suggests that 'we', his readers, should look a little more into 'ourselves', and attend to 'plain honest morals'. He begins to build the first steps towards his philosophy of self-inspection, as it might be called, of introspection, of self-examination. The point of reference is of course the individual. One of the aspects peculiar to Shaftesbury's viewpoint is his insistence upon the need to practice this philosophy. Seen cumulatively, but especially in the Soliloquy, what he called his 'home-spun philosophy' is perhaps one of Shaftesbury's most important themes; important that is, to him personally, since it most probably derived from his experience in Holland. Insofar as it constitutes his guide to practical Philosophising it is of course, part of the broader exercise of 'socialising philosophy'.

Shaftesbury's prescription is outlined in the following way:

'Methinks, my Lord, it would be well for us if, before we ascended into the higher regions of divinity; we would vouchsafe to descend a little into ourselves, and bestow some poor thoughts upon plain honest morals. When we had once looked into ourselves, and distinguished well the nature of our own affections, we should probably be fitter judges of the diviness of a character, and discern better what affections were suitable or unsuitable to a perfect being. We might then understand how to love and praise, when we had acquired some consistent notion of what was laudable or lovely. Otherwise we might chance to do God little honour, when we intended him the most. For 'tis hard to imagine what honour can arise to the Deity from the praises of creatures who are unable to discern what is praiseworthy or excellent in their own kind.' 19

Shaftesbury has again suggested an idea rather than developed it, for he proceeds next to consider enthusiasm in the social sense

once again. He writes of enthusiasm at second hand. This, he asserts, takes place when a man who does not have the 'original commotions' in himself but has a disposition to believe too readily what others tell him. The testimony of others gains ground for assertions of miracles, but armed with knowledge of human nature and of enthusiasm, a man will be able to withstand the delusions which force themselves upon him, backed by the specious aspect of moral certainty and matters of fact.²⁰

He then describes recent manifestations of false miracles, among them identifying the prearranged 'possession' which adepts were subsequently found to have displayed for financial gain. Shaftesbury says that he himself has seen one such person 'possessed' but that he could not tell whether the spirit responsible for this possession was a sacred or a profane spirit, the manifestations being the same. The target here is the French Prophets, but Shaftesbury broadens the discussion by citing the authority of the ancient writers in respect of the response that should be made by the magistrate. The magistrate should make such provision as would allow the sect to be accommodated at the least cost and disturbance to society. Once again, he repeats the physical associations that are to be found with 'enthusiasm', - fits, distempers, writhings, quakings and tremblings. He concludes

20. cf., John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding p 65. Locke also sets out the case for examining the parameters of the understanding in order that man might not be deceived. This is part of a wider call for a reappraisal of the role of understanding, of reason, that was taking place at this time, and Shaftesbury's writing can be seen as part of this intellectual movement.

that from outward appearance alone it is hard to distinguish between true and false enthusiasm.

Having mentioned love and knight-errantry earlier, he is able to look more closely into kinds of enthusiasm which are not of religious origin. There is a transport of the mind whenever it tries to confront ideas which are too great for it, and this has, says Shaftesbury, been found in heroes, poets, orators, musicians, - even in philosophers. The problem is not one of being aware of enthusiasm but of knowing how to judge of it. Here the first duty is to know oneself, and this in turn is best done by keeping to a good humoured temper, - to philosophise is to cultivate a disposition.²¹

Shaftesbury's conclusion to the Letter, then, is that it is necessary to know the self if man is to avoid the allurements of enthusiasm and similar delusions. In order to be able to know and master the self, it is necessary to cultivate the good-humoured dispositions. Such prescription as he makes therefore, involves practice of philosophy, and this is one aspect of Shaftesbury's 'socialisation of philosophy', his advocacy of a need for applied philosophy in the matter of living.

21. Grean, in his Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, argues that enthusiasm is a central concept in Shaftesbury's writings. Although this study of intention, purpose and method, is different in emphasis to Grean's, where the focus is on content and idea, it may seem that enthusiasm is being depreciated here. Yet Shaftesbury is for the most part being descriptive in the Letter. Grean needs to tell his reader what Shaftesbury means to say (pp24-5), which is a doubtful support to some of his claims. Grean is important and we stand indebted to his work, but he does reveal in this, some of the weakness of trying to consider intention (ie. what was Shaftesbury trying to achieve? what did he do so?) within a conceptual framework, by using a key concept as a fundamental of interpretation.

The Letter is not a formal treatise in the sense that it is a methodical presentation of an argument which can be followed step by step. It contains not one key idea but several. Enthusiasm is important but it is not the only operative theme, others being ridicule, good-humour, and the introspective home-spun philosophy. These are marshalled together and deployed not so as to display their own intellectual characteristics, their conceptual quality and clarity, but so that they can act in such a way as would enable the presentation of his overall view to secure adherents among the assumed readership. This readership would include those without 'professional' or career interests in questions of beliefs and morals. In the following chapters, it will be possible to trace these key ideas and others, as they developed in the Characteristics. It will become clear that an important feature of Shaftesbury's book, relatively neglected hitherto, is not simply the arguments and ideas per se, but the skill with which they are managed, the targets at which they were directed assuming greater significance in their turn.

Of the treatises which Shaftesbury published as independent treatises before the collection which made up the first edition of the Characteristics (1711), the Letter caused most, indeed perhaps the only response in the world of letters. Shaftesbury gives an account of the two sorts of responses that it received in his first Miscellany.²² The English critics were less polite than the French and Dutch. Given this limited critical reaction, it is possible to

22. Characteristicsii, 166.

include an account of the reaction to the Letter in close proximity to our account of the contents of the treatise, rather than seeking to treat the critical reaction to the Characteristics as an independent subject.²³

Here we are not looking at the reaction to even this single treatise as something to be viewed in itself. The perspective that is taken is to exemplify the sort of reaction Shaftesbury elicited from his English critics, especially since they demonstrate the 'opposition' part of which he could barely have hoped to persuade. They represent a part, but only a part, of Shaftesbury's audience. They illustrate what it was that such a part found acceptable in the Letter and what it found repugnant. They give an added dimension to the Letter, helping us to see it in a wider context. It may be that the sample of three printed replies is far from representative of the reaction to the Letter, a great part of which must have been unspoken and unwritten. For our purpose this limited reaction serves to suggest what it was about the Letter that contemporaries thought so significant that they reacted in the way that they did. There are then, three reasons for including the following brief account. Firstly to exemplify the sort of reaction provoked by the Letter; secondly, to identify aspects of particular interest; and thirdly, to broaden the context of the discussion.

23. There is probably room for a study of the impact of the Characteristics, on an independent basis. Certainly, the impact after 1713 would be of interest if evidence could be found to support any but the most tentative of hypotheses. This would occasion questions beyond the scope of the present work, the intention here being to look at the reaction with a particular viewpoint in mind, as suggested above.

The first reply to the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm appeared in the year that the Letter itself was printed. The title of this rejoinder was Remarks upon the Letter to a Lord Concerning Enthusiasm In a Letter to a Gentleman, Not written in Raillery, yet in Good Humour. Its author disagrees with Shaftesbury but is anxious to emulate the tone of his writing.

'I have no knowledge of the Man, more than that he has the perfect Mien of a Gentleman; and that I find in his Letter a great deal of very Manly sense; Not only neat clever Turns, but noble Thoughts, expressed in as vigorous as proper Words: Very useful Speculations, were they made use of for their proper purposes:...'24

This writer says that Shaftesbury does not distinguish sufficiently between liberty and licentiousness, between liberty of opinion and liberty of practice. He agrees with Shaftesbury that persecution is not desirable. He argues that it is God who must judge men since justice is one of God's attributes. Since God is judge it is necessary that he dispense not only praise and blame but also reward and punishment. God cannot, however, be angry, desire revenge, or be jealous. These says the critic are characteristics of humans and to attribute them to God is but metaphor being taken literally. The critic thinks that Shaftesbury is aware of this anthropomorphic metaphor and hints about Shaftesbury's being ingenuous. He identifies the variety of enthusiasms in Shaftesbury's Letter, adding that most people would call some of these distractions rather than enthusiasms. He is pointing, perhaps, to the lack of rigour which

24. Remarks upon the Letter to a Lord Concerning Enthusiasm (London: 1708) p 10; hereafter 'Remarks upon the Letter'

Shaftesbury has been using. Where Shaftesbury speaks of the need to exercise some scepticism about sense impressions and the evidence of appearance, and then adds in the need to be sceptical about the reports given us by others, Shaftesbury's critic asserts that such scepticism leads to a 'farewel to all Moral certainty'. As to Shaftesbury's view that in the main all things were ordered in the best way, this critic has little time for such notions:

'And therefore the best of the Pagan Philosophers would not offer at maintaining, that in the main all things are kindly ordered and well disposed (as the Gentleman's Words are) but upon the supposition of a Future Judgement, whereby all will be set right, and all Objections answer'd, taken from constant observation, that in this World, all things commonly come alike to all, and the vilest Men prosper here, as if they were Rewarded for their Villanies; and the most Virtuous and Good Men as frequently are great Sufferers, as if they were punish'd for their Goodness.' 25

The critic did not like Shaftesbury's method, although he admired his style and language. The method, he complained, made it difficult to set out Shaftesbury's position fully, to re-assemble his argument, in order to subject it to just criticism.

Broadly speaking, this response was not unfair to Shaftesbury. It was informed, and identified one or two areas in which Shaftesbury needed to support his position. It reveals that there was at this time, the possibility of fair-minded response, and that criticism did not necessarily mean taking the bludgeon to a writer with whom one disagreed. Shaftesbury may not have seen this, and if he did

seems to have discounted it as a reply in his Miscellany.

A further response appeared in the following year, 1709. It was based upon the Remarks upon the Letter. The manner of the delivery leaves little doubt that the author, having read the Remarks thought that the writer of the Letter had come off too easily. This critic saw in the Letter Concerning Enthusiasm the equating of Christianity and heathen religion. He also thought that Shaftesbury had made all religion the product of custom, settlement, imagination. In fact, this was to prove an interesting anticipation of Shaftesbury's account of different religions in the Characteristics where social and physical determinants of religion received much more attention than they did in the Letter where the emphasis had lay rather upon the psychology of religion. Our critic warning to his theme, suggests that Shaftesbury has implicitly made Bacchus and Apollo comparable to Jesus; that Shaftesbury appears to believe in deism, but not in the immortality of the soul, nor does he believe in rewards and punishments, nor in revealed religion:

'.. This Infected Person (Shaftesbury), and Tainted Airy Enthusiast, takes all Revealed Religion to be little better than Infection ...' 26

Once again Shaftesbury's style is commended, although this time approval was heavily qualified:

'I own here all the sparkling Air, nice Turns, and clever sorts of Fanny, or lively Allusions, that are to be found in these Papers; with whatever bids fair

26. Reflections upon a Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (London:1709)p9.
- sometimes attributed to Edward Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester, see, Catalogue of Dr.William's Library - entry under Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

towards a higher kind of Sense, and Exercise of Reason, in some Parts of 'em. But still I must say, that it is Wit full of Wind, and much Froth; that Levity and Vanity, as well as Infidelity are in its Composition; that it is more to be commended for its Wit than Wisdom; for Banter than for Reason, in much the greatest part of it: In a Word, that the Author must come down from this High Rope, and all his pretty Friskings and Anticks on it, before I can acknowledge him amongst the Sober, or pronounce him free of his Distemper of Enthusiasm.'

Ironically enough, before writing the Letter, Shaftesbury had composed the Sociable Enthusiast which remained as yet the unpublished acknowledgement of the need to espouse 'true enthusiasm', so that in a way Shaftesbury did not seek to be free of this distemper.

In general though the style of criticism here exhibited represents that which Shaftesbury thought all too common. Hearty, vulgar (i.e. common) misrepresentation was its main support. The critic says that Shaftesbury would have the people go to puppet shows on Sundays rather than going to Church. He observes that the Athenians dealt with Socrates by murdering him despite what Shaftesbury says of the Athenian philosopher's treatment in the theatre. He suggests a club of like-minded people with whom the author of the Letter could find companionship, the membership, 'high Wits or rare Ingenioso's', who applaud Hobbes, might include such authors as prepared:

'the Oracles and the Rights (that operose Piece of Mischief and Subtlety; nay, pardon here my Enthusiasm, that Quintessence of Gravity Impertinence and Impiety; it should have been the Wrongs of the Church as to its Bulk and Design), the Tale of the Tub...'27

27. Ibid., p 25. The 'Oracles' refers to the Oracles of Reason (1693), whose author was supposed to have been Charles Blount. 'The Rights' may refer to The Rights of Protestant Dissenters (1704) by John Shute, whose publication led to a reply from John Perks and Henry Sacheverell, the Rights of the Church of England Asserted (1705)

The critic believes that the way to treat the French Prophets is to regard them with contempt, and not to ridicule them. He remarks the appearance of advocates of liberty of conscience, adding that in such a way had the 'Romanists' behaved in 'a late reign'. Shaftesbury among the other charges that are brought against him, is also accused of allowing the comparability of the early Christians and the French Prophets. Where Shaftesbury had inclined to a rational argument for inspiration, namely that it was imposture or self deception, both this author and the earlier critic argue that possession is a likelier cause.

Thirdly, in the same year as this response to the Letter, a further rejoinder appeared. This was called Bartlemy Fair, or an Inquiry after Wit which was attributed to Mr Wotton, but which may have been by Mary Astell.²⁸ Here the political as well as the religious find expression. There is a mock dedication to the Kit-Kat Club, whose leaders have preferred not to go and fight for their country. This must have been first levelled against the Junto Whigs some ten years earlier. However, there does seem to be an awareness that the Letter, if known to be by a Whig, would be taken up by such as the Kit-Kat, the leading Whig Club of its day. This may have happened, although there is not much to support such an idea, Shaftesbury having mentioned the disclosure of the Letter in a letter to

28. British Library, Catalogue of Printed Books; replies to Shaftesbury which were anonymous. vide. COOPER (Anthony Ashley), 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.

Somers of July 1708.²⁹

In this reply the wit and humour assume a quality of leadenness. Even Shaftesbury's style and presentation is made the butt of this heavy drollery:

'...might I presume to give a Character of so great a man as my Lord xxx's correspondent (Shaftesbury), I would say, that Bayes himself is many bars short of him, as ~~having~~ never wrote anything comparable to this Letter. For a Good-humoured Man, may be one strong Act of an animated Faith, and a Good-Will into the bargain work himself up to a Belief of finding in it, all the Eloquence of Tully, the Wit of Horace, the Beauties of Virgil, and Demonstrations of Euclid. Milton's Blank Verse holds no comparison with what is everywhere sprinkled in our letter; whose singular and choice Expressions, are suitable to its Justness of Thought and Strength of Reasoning; to the Author's Zeal to save Men's sense, by his new sort of Saint-errantry, and Soul-rescuing spirit. The Letter, in a word is a very Drawcansir of a Book. It cuts and slashes all that Men have hitherto accounted Sacred; is so fierce a Hero, as to fright the Good Christian, with its Pannies; snub up the Priests of all Denominations, baffle whole Armies of Martyrs; and does what it will, without regard to Truth or Justice, Decency or Good Manners. Preferring that one Quality of turning everything into Ridicule, above all your Moral or Christian Virtues put together.' 30.

Taken together the three responses to the Letter may represent the variety of critical opinion. They were increasingly unfavourable, although it might be stretching a point to argue that this reflected the underlying swell of opinion on the side of what was to break forth the following year, in 1710. Shaftesbury may just have been unfortunate, but clearly as time passed his authorship was increasingly likely to have been known, and a political enmity may have increased the vitriolic content of the last attack of the three. More successfully, we can identify the style as being an important -

29. Rand p 386. Shaftesbury to Somers, 12 July 1708. If taken at face value these explanations of Shaftesbury's accidentally being brought to press would suggest unusual misfortune. The first Inquiry being unauthorised, and then apparently this later publication; it is possible that prevailing manners left the 3rd Earl in a somewhat uncertain position vis a vis the profession of writer.

30. Bart'lemy Fair, or An Enquiry After Wit p 26.

constituent in the impact of the Letter and may adjudge its impact in this respect to have been a point in favour of the author.

The method was less successful, since it presents difficulties for critical appreciation of the argument (as opposed to the literary merit). However, since this matter was increasingly laid aside and Shaftesbury's argument was less carefully considered, it might be unfair to suggest that his audience shared this response, with the critics. In fact, it does seem possible that one reason that the critics became incensed was because Shaftesbury appeared to be changing the rules of this sort of discourse, moving away from ratiocination, and that they were unprepared as yet to move from logic to belles lettres.

CHAPTER SEVEN.FURTHER SOCIAL CRITICISM: THE ESSAY.

The reception of the Letter does not appear to have had any deterrent effect upon its author in the few months subsequent to its appearance. The reverse may in fact have happened, and Shaftesbury may actually have been encouraged by Somers and other friends to pursue this less physically demanding life-style. Shaftesbury's Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour appeared in May 1709, and may have anticipated the coarser criticism aimed at the author of the Letter.

In this chapter, attention will be given once again to Shaftesbury's method, and to that which he sought to undermine. Of particular interest in the Essay is Shaftesbury's concern with practice and skill in for example, the use of banter or raillery, and in the use of reason wherein lies his emphasis upon the practice of philosophy. In the context of the contemporary social mores this becomes part of the socialisation of philosophy.

The Essay was said to be written in 'a letter to a friend'. The dedication which had been implied in the Letter, to Lord Somers, had to be dropped, because Shaftesbury understood well enough the nature of that with which he was wrestling, and had no wish to involve Somers, a public character, by association:

'...his care to remove your lodship from the suspicions of the clergy, who have of late been so horribly alarmed, has made him unwilling to give you publicly the air of a correspondence with a supposed enemy of the Church, for such the author of this essay will infallibly be esteemed, though he names neither Church nor Priest, nor says anything concerning any mystery of religions, but has kept to such measures of decency as may secure

him, ... from giving offence to any except the merest bigots. All his aim is, in plain sense, to recommend plain honesty, which in the bustle made about religion is fairly dropped. The defenders of religion, as well as its opposers, are content to make nothing or a mere name of virtue.' 1

A connection between the Letter and the Essay is made at the beginning of the Essay by the stated intention to further clarify the writer's views upon good-humoured raillery, on banter and on ridicule. The context is not philosophical in the sense that we might conclude from a discussion of say, the idea of ridicule, or the idea of enthusiasm. Shaftesbury briefly proceeds on a more empirical basis to look at the use made of such techniques of ridicule in society. Therein he presents the reader with his views as to why the technique of ridicule and banter takes the form that it does in his world. The problem of defining what it is, as opposed to how it is used and why it is so used, is less central to Shaftesbury's interest.

Firstly, how is ridicule used in Shaftesbury's society?

'In good earnest, when one considers what use is sometimes made of this species of wit, and to what an excess it has risen of late in some characters of the age, one may be startled a little, and in doubt what to think of the practice, or wither this rallying humour will at length carry us. It has passed from the men of pleasure to the men of business. Politicians have been infected with it; and the grave affairs of State have been treated with an air of irony and banter, The ablest negotiators have been known the notablest buffoons; the most celebrated authors, the greatest masters of burlesque.' 2

1. PRO 30/24/22/54. Shaftesbury to Somers 2 June 1709.
2. Characteristics 1, 44-5

Shaftesbury then argues that it is sometimes in the interest of man that some such defensive raillery be employed upon occasion. A sufficiency of knowledge will bring enlightenment, but an excess will mean that enlightenment gives way to confusion. There are important implications for moral and political philosophy in such a view with which Shaftesbury does not fully come to terms. An attempt to do so was made by Mill in his essay On Liberty, and it is worth remarking the tradition of limited liberalism that links Shaftesbury and Mill. For Shaftesbury at this juncture, it is enough to set down the following:

'...'Tis real humanity and kindness to hide strong truths from tender eyes. And to do this by a pleasant amusement is easier and civilier than by a harsh denial or remarkable reserve.' 3

Within the circumference prescribed by the undefined strong truth, Shaftesbury argues that the problem lies less in the border case, but more in the prevalence to conceal too much that need not be concealed in the first place. In other words, what is going on is that Shaftesbury is arguing that current practice be changed within the broad area set out by strong truth. Philosophically, Shaftesbury does not look for the marginal case, and argue for an extension of freedom of speech by a preparedness to include as permissible what has hitherto been outside accepted norms. Rather, he looks at practice within the norms and seeks to change that. The advancement of 'liberty of opinion' is being carried forward but in a sense different to that normally employed. This becomes

clearer, in comparison with Shaftesbury's own remarks:

'...to go about industriously to confound^{men}, in a mysterious manner, and to make advantage or draw pleasure from that perplexity they are thrown into by such uncertain talk, is as unhandsome in a way of raillery as when done with the greatest seriousness, or in the most solemn way of deceit. It may be necessary, as well now as heretofore, for wise men to speak in parables, and with a double meaning, that the enemy may be amused, and they only who have ears to hear may hear. But 'tis certainly a mean, impotent, and dull sort of wit which amuses all alike, and leaves the most sensible man, and even a friend, equally in doubt, and at a loss to understand what one's real mind is, upon any subject. This is that gross sort of raillery which is so offensive in good company. And indeed there is as much difference between one sort and another as between fair dealing and hypocrisy, or between the genteel wit and the most scurrilous buffoonery.' 4

After identifying this gross sort of wit as impolite Shaftesbury remarks that another sort has also had its day, namely the wit that derives some of its character from the quibble, that is the practice of punning. This was formerly practised in the Court, but is now 'banished the town and all good company; there are only some few footsteps of it in the country'. It remains in the nurseries, and among pedants and pupils. This is perhaps descriptive and prescriptive, in that Shaftesbury was using the decline of a fashion to advocate its total elimination. It also allows the reader to see where certain of Shaftesbury's priorities lie: the identification of the town and good company, or the country as a backward area, alien and antiquated to the polite, and of nurseries and pedants as being equally distinct from the polite world, the polished world.

Secondly, how does Shaftesbury deal with the problem of

defining what it is that he is talking about? He suggests a definition in terms of practice.

'To describe true raillery would be as hard a matter, and perhaps as little to the purpose, as to define good breeding. None can understand the speculation, besides those who have the practice.' 5

This is not developed for Shaftesbury wishes to return to a description of the practices of those who think that they have the skills requisite to the practice of raillery and banter, but who are actually ill-suited by virtue of their other commitments. These are 'formal' kinds of men; 'formallest pedant', 'grave gentlemen', 'zealots', 'tragical gentlemen' are some of the descriptions used by Shaftesbury, to suggest the clergyman-author of the time.

The characteristics of such gentlemen whose manners are so inappropriate to their intentions are briefly touched upon:

'The tragical gentlemen with the grim aspect and mien of true inquisitors, have but an ill grace when they vouchsafe to quit their austerity, and be jocose and pleasant with an adversary, whom they would choose to treat in a very different manner.. They would in all probability soon quit their farce, and make a thorough tragedy.' 6

These gentlemen concur with the principle of debate by engaging in written disputation with the 'free-writers' but then call upon the 'secular arm' when they do not achieve the success they seek. In other words, Shaftesbury is saying to his reader that the clerical writers want to have their cake and eat it too. They want the opportunity to achieve personal success by refuting the sceptical opposition, but if they fail they wished to have recourse

5. Characteristics i 46

6. Ibid., i, 47

to the law, and to bring prosecutions and presentments, for such crimes as blasphemy, heresy, and profanity. Whilst this is not without truth as a description of what might be seen to be happening, there was the other side of the coin, the feelings of clergymen who thought themselves assailed by heresy and dissent, immorality and intellectual criticism, from below and above, of clergymen who saw themselves as fighting a battle for the defence of the Church and this aspect is not presented at all in Shaftesbury's account.⁷

It is the inconstancy that Shaftesbury particularly remarks about the controversial writers. At one time they are jocular, at another they intimidate. When they are jocular, they seek to laugh away the error of their opponents, when they intimidate they seek to frighten away the error. Here, perhaps is the place for Shaftesbury's Horatian epigram that precedes the Essay, hac urget lupus, hac canis, 'here attacks the wolf, here the dog'.

The combination of pedant and bigot is, according to Shaftesbury capable of 'sinking' the best book. Matters must be arranged on a different basis:

'The temper of the pedagogue suits not with the age. And the world however it will be taught, will **not** be tutored. If a philosopher speaks, men hear him willingly while he keeps to his philosophy. So is a Christian heard while he keeps to his professed charity and meekness. In a gentleman we allow of pleasantries as being managed always with good breeding, and never gross or clownish. But if a mere scholastic, intrenching upon all these characters, and writing as it were by starts and rebounds from one of these to another, appears upon

7. c.f. Geoffrey Holmes, The Trial of Dr. Sacheverell (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973) Chapter II.

the whole as little able to keep the temper of Christianity as to use the reason of a philosopher or the raillery of a man of breeding, what wonder is it, if the monstrous product of such a jumbled brain be ridiculous to the world?' §

Shaftesbury then closes down this section of his discussion of writers of religious controversy. It is noticeable that in his definition of good breeding as practice, rather than as something that one knows, and in the above passage, Shaftesbury is making an appeal to men of similar sentiments. It would be pointless to cite men of breeding as a life-style, if such men did not exist and neither did the prescription which would allow their creation. If Shaftesbury's men of breeding, and the 'polite' world do exist, as we may suppose, then if Shaftesbury is doing anything other than preaching to the converted, he must be seen to be engaged in a consolidation process, an affirmation of the values of such men and their society, and a denunciation of that society which they were replacing.

In a manner that is becoming familiar, Shaftesbury then turns his attention elsewhere. He is cutting another trench towards the citadel, preparing to plant another mine. This time he considers scepticism and reason. He refers to a late 'free' conversation, presumably, but by no means certainly, 'free' in the sense of free-thinking. At this conversation he recalls, he had listened with apparent acceptance to the sceptical conclusions that had been made. It would seem that Shaftesbury here had a particular occasion in mind, but that in the context of the Characteristics he is prepared

to accept the 'free' conversation, and to let his reader know of his attendance amongst those who discoursed after this fashion. This would have been a sufficient hint to his readers as to his position, and would have confirmed the belief of those supporters of 'authority' or the 'establishment', that the author belonged to the opposite camp.⁹

It is the manner and conduct of ^{the} conversation that Shaftesbury emphasises, rather than its sceptical outcome. He admits that it would appear paradoxical that one who believes in the power of reason should condone a discussion that appeared to end in scepticism. This paradox he resolves, by pointing to the need for exercise in the reasoning arts. In a passage akin to that cited above on the nature of true raillery, Shaftesbury says:

'...according to the notion I have of reason, neither the written treatises of the learned, nor the set discourses of the eloquent, are able of themselves to teach the use of it. 'Tis the habit alone of reasoning which can make a reasoner. And men can never be better invited to the habit than when they find pleasure in it. A freedom of raillery, a liberty in decent language to question everything, and an allowance of unravelling or refuting any argument, without offence to the arguer, are the only terms which can render such speculative conversations any way agreeable.'¹⁰

In fact, this may be taken for a statement about reason, about the freedom of wit and its rationale, about the role of wit, and speculation vis a vis society. It is a prescription for the conduct of such conversation in the polite society, but as a prescription suggests that polite society is not so extensive as the author might wish.

9. Characteristics i, 48-9

10. Ibid., i 49.

Our concern is with the socialisation of philosophy, Shaftesbury's intention and achievements, and this represents a clear statement of purpose.

However, in the absence of many such 'free' conversations, the written treatise and eloquent discourses are but so much theory since the speculative conversations are confined to narrower bounds, where pedantry and bigotry 'reign' and the subject reason is kept within strict 'laws'. Shaftesbury then reflects upon the proper environment in which reasoning would prosper, and the present environment is duly censured.¹¹

Shaftesbury relates the prosperity of reasoning and wit to the socio-political environment. Discourse and oratory or declamation are associated with the lack of good reasoning, and, it may be noted, are products of scholarship and the study, preaching and the pulpit of established forms.

The Ancients, in contrast, demonstrate reasoning powers at their best in the setting of informal gatherings at the table, where wit, humour, almost necessary accompaniments to good reasoning in the view of Shaftesbury, were exercised along with the reasoning faculties.

The magisterial approach says Shaftesbury keeps understanding at a distance, and 'out of reach'. Also associated with formality,

11. From the viewpoint of the historian of philosophy, and particularly of political philosophy, Shaftesbury may be seen as arguing on behalf of 'toleration' since this is what is implicit in some of his arguments in the Essay. Here, the emphasis tends to lie more on the social implications of Shaftesbury's ideas, though the distinction is one of perspective.

grimace and tone are considered 'mighty helps to imposture'. The point being that it is not merely the formal manner that is to be criticised, but that Shaftesbury is prepared to suggest that formal content also is subject to doubt. He writes of how easier a sophistical argument may stand when backed by a severe brow. Clearly, this is taking matters further than the question of presentation and environment and Shaftesbury may be viewed as social critic here, even though there is no specific view that he could be said to be criticising.

It is the counter-argument of the more formal reasoners that Shaftesbury anticipates in his next passage. It is not philosophical, but relates to the social consequences of ideas and philosophies:

'But some gentlemen there are so full of the spirit of bigotry and false zeal, that when they hear principles examined, sciences and arts inquired into, and matters of importance treated with this frankness of humour, they imagine presently that all professions must fall to the ground, all establishments come to ruin, and nothing orderly or decent be left standing in the world. They fear, or pretend to fear, that religion itself will be endangered by this free way, and are therefore as much alarmed at this liberty in private conversation, and under prudent management, as if it were grossly used in public company, or before the solemnest assembly.' 12

This leads naturally enough to the discussion of the sort of social characteristics that the freedom of wit or reasoning is to assume. Shaftesbury is, in fact, setting parameters around the society in which philosophy is to be more extensively utilised, according to his prescription for its liberation. Of course, this complements what he has said earlier about limiting the use of banter, and

the need to 'hide strong truths'.

There is then something of a distinction established between what I have referred to as the 'polite society' in which Shaftesbury's friends would like to be given the opportunity to operate, and the rest of society. This may best be shown, where the difficulty of circumscribing the polite and the not-polite will be seen to be assumed rather:

' 'Tis surely a violation of the freedom of public assemblies for any one to take the chair who is neither called nor invited to it. To start questions, or manage debates, which offend the public ear, is to be wanting in that respect which is due to common society. Such matters should either not be treated at all in public or in such manner as to occasion no scandal or disturbance. The public is not, on any account, to be laughed at to its face; or so rephrehended for its follies as to make it think itself condemned. And what is contrary to good breeding is in this respect as contrary to liberty. It belongs to men of slavish principles to affect a superiority over the vulgar, and to despise the multitude. The lovers of mankind respect and honour conventions and societies of men. And in mixed company and places where men are met promiscuously on account of diversions or affairs, 'tis an imposition and a hardship to force them to hear what they dislike, and to treat of matters in a dialect which many who are present have perhaps been never used to. 'Tis a breach of the harmony of public conversation to take things in such a key as is above the common reach, put others to silence, and robs them of their privilege or turn.' 13.

There is obviously some difficulty here for Shaftesbury's attitude to the public is at once benevolent, condemning those who would affect a 'superiority over the vulgar', and at the same time remarking that things may be discussed at some level which is 'above the common reach'. Of course, we must not too readily identify the public and the vulgar.

So the freedom for which Shaftesbury is making his plea is not to prevail throughout society. Where then is it to have its home? Shaftesbury's answer is that it should be allowed among 'private society' and 'select companies'.¹⁴ Here, 'friends meet knowingly'. We may infer from this that Shaftesbury's companies would be small, possibly numbering no more than 15-20 at any one time. According to Shaftesbury, this form of society, of groups of friends gathered to discuss whatever they will, can only be made into 'good company' when there is freedom of raillery and good humour, which allows the gathering to be free of the 'formality of business, and the tutorage and dogmaticalness of the schools.' In short, Shaftesbury favours the 'liberty of the club'.

If we step away from the Essay and the Characteristics and reflect upon Shaftesbury in the wider world, the subject of much of our earlier chapters, we may be able to set out the background to some of this reasonable-sounding plea, and suggest its distance from prevalent standards. Shaftesbury himself, especially in the earlier part of the first decade of the 18th century, referred in his correspondence to the dangers of it being opened. His correspondence is not without hints as to secrets he was privy to, or views he held, knowledge he had, but which he could not risk setting down. There were cryptic notes in the notebooks, significant perhaps only

14. There was, it may be noted, a Select Society, flourishing in Edinburgh later in the 18th century, and the connection with Shaftesbury's usage may be direct, though that is a matter of conjecture. The use of 'select' gives us some idea of the social distinction, apartness that such groups as the Edinburgh society, sought for themselves. Shaftesbury shows that this was based less on principles of exclusivity than might otherwise appear.

to himself, and of course there was the 'cabalistic' drawing of symbols. Yet this was not confined to Shaftesbury alone, as the correspondence of the Marlboroughs, Lord Godolphin and Queen Anne has long demonstrated. The motives were mixed, a wish to be secret or a need to be secret, the desire to assume other more equal, or less formal, personae: they could be psychological or simply the result of the political world. From the viewpoint of Shaftesbury, we may see him attempting to create room for a type of gathering which society had not as yet accustomed itself to, and a type of conversation that was equally unfamiliar.

Again the club life of Augustan England, of Wills, White's, and the world of Mr Spectator might appear superficially to fit Shaftesbury's requirement. In fact, they show that the requirement for convivial gatherings of men of like minds and similar interests was not perceived by Shaftesbury alone but that a network of coffee-houses, some with distinctive characteristics, already existed. However, the difference between these establishments and Shaftesbury's ideal, is that the latter is conceived of as a place for private meetings, of friends, to discuss or ridicule serious subjects; Shaftesbury's gatherings are diversions for thinking rather than drinking men. It is this concern with the intellectual aspect that allows the use of the phrase 'socialising of philosophy'. Perhaps, even the Salon might have proved too public for Shaftesbury's purpose, although that 'institution' is perhaps as close a comparison as may be suggested.

Shaftesbury returns in the Essay to his description of the 'free' conversation to which he has earlier referred. We have been

told of its taking place and of the sceptical conclusions that were reached, and of Shaftesbury's acceptance of them as a consequence of differences of opinion among non-dogmatical individuals. Shaftesbury was not scandalised but reflects pleasantly upon the 'pleasant confusion' with which the gathering had terminated. They had discussed for some time morality and religion, says Shaftesbury, suggesting his disdain for taboo subjects, and had given more serious consideration to the validity of appeals to Common Sense. The gathering may therefore be taken to have been philosophical in a non-specialist, non-professional way. The prevalence of certain opinions is not an argument in favour of their being true. Shaftesbury cites a familiar example which may be regarded as performing another signalling function between author and reader:

' As for policy; what sense or whose could be called common, was equally a question. If plain British or Dutch sense were right, Turkish and French sense must certainly be very wrong. And as mere nonsense as passive obedience seemed, we found it to be the common sense of a great party amongst ourselves, a greater party in Europe, and perhaps the greatest part of all the world besides.' 15

As he moves into the Second Part of the Essay, Shaftesbury emerges as more experimental in his approach, and at the same time more specific in his targets. Two areas in particular are subject to his criticism. On the one hand there is established religion, and, on the other, prevalent scholasticism and associated philoso-

15. Characteristics i, 56. Also Chapter Three above on the significance of passive obedience in ideological terms. The Tories were also regarded as pro-French, The Whigs as pro-Dutch at this time.

phies. Socially, the background was that the Churchmen, Shaftesbury's bigots and zealots, were recruited from two main sources, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It was the English universities as opposed to the British universities, that Shaftesbury had in mind when he drove on his attack upon institutionalised learning. Shaftesbury addresses his arguments to undermining the position of the purveyors of such traditionalism in religion and learning. He uses a variety of means to do this, not all of which may be thought successful, but the variety employed suggests that he had reasons for not wishing to press the attack on any single line of approach. In the manner of his contemporaries, he would rather avoid revealed religion, the scriptures, than argue on such a basis. A third target emerges, namely 'selfish' or Epicurean philosophy,¹⁶ but this very much preludes his statements of his own views in the later treatises, and may be regarded as intermediate between the creation of an atmosphere or climate that would allow 'free' discussion, Shaftesbury's first task which required that clerics and scholastical men be deposed from their positions as arbiters of reasoning, and Shaftesbury's second task which was to project his own philosophy which could hold in such a

16. Of the fundamental difficulties that had confronted the established church at the Revolution, the loss of credibility in its authoritarian political ideology was one of the greatest shocks to which it was subjected. Shaftesbury's difficulty therefore, lay in identifying the intellectual or ideological content that justified the social form and practice. This was part of greater secularisation in the Church, of disputes about biblical chronology, which caused the Church to be elusive. Hobbesian thought represented an alternative, and easier target, justified by its prevalence in these times.

newly created atmosphere or climate. Shaftesbury's method, of following first one trail then another, then of resuming the first and so on, this apparently random sapping, is continued. However, there is a shift from a defensiveness, as in the pleas for limited freedoms so far encountered, to a more aggressive stance.

This more offensive stance is not immediately perceivable however, as Shaftesbury opens with a description of the position in which an Ethiopian would find himself if placed among West Europeans at a masquerade. The Ethiopian, would concludes Shaftesbury rightly find the Europeans ridiculous, but would be seen as ridiculous in his turn, if he continued to derive the same sort of smusement when the masks had been removed. In this way Shaftesbury prepares his reader for the first of several attacks upon the societal aspects of religion. He describes loosely but supposedly historically a time when men believed what they wanted, and this being reflected in their faces, they had open countenances. Thereafter the magistrate, by which Shaftesbury means the civil authority, determined that all men should think the same things, that their 'intellectual complexions' should be made fairly uniform. Subsequently, the magistrates had given way to a new order of 'tire-men', who agreed that men should wear the same intellectual apparel but were unable to determine what form it should take. In these circumstances, Shaftesbury says, it does not come as a surprise to find the thought-patterns (Shaftesbury continues his analogy with attire and dress) were cramped and disordered.

The conclusion that Shaftesbury would have the reader draw is that although reason and truth have been obscured as to be scar-

cely recognisable, nevertheless there is the possibility of recognition by the discerning and, by implication, sceptical or pyrrhonic views are erroneous. In drawing such erroneous conclusions, men are likened to the Ethiopian who does not recognise the 'real' faces.

During this brief discussion Shaftesbury refers not to religion, but 'counterfeit Vizards', the 'original cheat', and 'these impostures'. In fact, because of the extensive use of metaphor it may be argued that it is not merely religion that Shaftesbury is obliquely attacking, but a whole but indefinite world view.¹⁷

It is appropriate at this point to remark that Shaftesbury is prepared to set his discussion in an historical setting. Admittedly, this is being rather free with the word historical, for Shaftesbury's history is of a broad-brush variety rather than of specific chronological character. Nevertheless, he refers to the pre-Greek civilisations, or barbarisms, and describes how religion, or the control of men's views, was practised. It was something that he later returned to in his Miscellanies, particularly the second. It allowed him to expose the relationship between political authority and religion without approaching too closely the situation of his own times.

The suggestion that the leaders of these old-religions were deliberately seeking to lead the people from whom they derived their power, into superstition and intellectual bondage found an echo in

Bernard Mandeville's Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue (1714).

The idea itself of politically inclined men contriving virtue to overawe the mob, was of classical origin. In this area, Shaftesbury may be seen to be lending support to views already enjoying some currency.¹⁸ Shaftesbury however, tended to place less emphasis upon the 'virtue' element, since he wished to give approval to virtue, and to speak more generally of what we might call thought-patterns or belief-systems. The impact of the suggestion, which concerns us, was that Shaftesbury could by this means intimate that the leaders, political or religious, of society deliberately sought to inveigle the people.

Given that some men deliberately sought to delude and mislead the people, how ought a man to react, asks Shaftesbury. One way would be to disbelieve all the good things that were advanced in favour of morality and religion and to advance a philosophy based upon opposite principles. Such a philosophy was put forward by Hobbes. It is to the selfish philosophy of Hobbes that Shaftesbury now turns his attention. Since it is posited as being the opposite of the 'moral' enticement philosophy which Shaftesbury has previously touched upon, there is once more, significance to his Horatian quotation of the wolf and the dog attacking from different sides, and implied is his intention to steer between these extremes.

Hobbesian philosophy, as we have seen, had featured as a target at which Shaftesbury could address his shafts of wit, as

18. Bernard Mandeville, An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue, vol.1. The Fable of the Bees ed. F.B. Kaye, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924, reprinted 1966) p 46 and fn.

early as 1698. His dissatisfaction with Hobbesianism, which he tended to view as an inspired presentation of the classical views of Epicurus Democritus and Lucretius - the atomist philosophy - had in fact, been set out by the mid-1690s. Its reappearance in the Characteristics might suggest that Leviathan had been hunted but had re-emerged from cover.¹⁹

In the light of our knowing that Shaftesbury regarded Hobbes as a modern expression of classical views, it need not be thought particularly surprising to find that the third Earl echoes the classical counter arguments against Epicureanism, merely addressing them to Hobbes instead. There is, however, some attempt to set Hobbes philosophy in the context of the civil disturbances of the mid-17th century. These disturbances had, according to Shaftesbury caused Hobbes to see in enthusiasms for liberty and a faith, the organising hand of men intent to deceive the people. Shaftesbury writes of Hobbes, 'an able and witty philosopher':

'His quarrel with religion was the same as with liberty. The same times gave him the same terror in this other kind. He had nothing before his eyes besides the ravage of enthusiasm, and the artifice of those who raised and conducted that spirit. And the good sociable man, as savage and unsociable as he would make himself and all mankind appear by his philosophy, exposed himself during his life, and took the utmost pains that after his death we might be delivered from the occasion of these terrors. He did his utmost to show us "that both in religion and morals we were imposed on by our governors; that there was nothing which by nature inclined us either way; nothing which naturally drew us to the love of what was without or beyond ourselves." Though the love of such great truths and sovereign maxims, as he imagined these

19. The phraseology comes from the title of Samuel I. Mintz's, The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (Cambridge, 1962)

to be, made him the most laborious of all men in composing systems of this kind for our use; and forced him, notwithstanding his natural fear, to run continually the highest risk of being a martyr for our deliverance'. 20

For the moment Shaftesbury is content to leave Hobbes and the selfish philosophers remarking that they do not constitute a threat to society, that the walls of art and science will not crumble under this kind of attack. In practice, the Hobbists are sociable fellows and their willingness to let others know of their supposed penetration of human motivation, is held up as the fundamental contradiction in their philosophy. Shaftesbury makes a remark that is more apposite ~~to~~ the times, when he observes that if the account of human nature given by such as Hobbes were adjudged accurate, the political inference to be drawn would not be that absolutism should be introduced but that a system of checks and balances should serve to limit each man in the pursuit of his private interest.²¹

Conscious perhaps of some of the difficulties he was encountering in this part of the Essay, Shaftesbury moved back from the Hobbesian philosophy in principle to its relation to the intellectual captivity of man caused by the type of magistrates and 'tiremen', which he had outlined earlier. The difficulties and tensions derive from his trying on the one hand to look at the growth of uniformity of opinion, within the loosest of historical settings, almost conjectural history, and sometimes less and purely specula-

20. Characteristics i, 62

21. Ibid., i, 64.

tive history, in which the account is supposedly descriptive; and on the other hand, from his wish to draw prescriptive inferences from this. This alone would probably stand as an expression of a point of view supported by an explanatory device purporting to represent 'facts'. His awareness of the decline of this intellectual captivity and the emergence of an alternative philosophy is perhaps of major significance. It is masked by his loosely setting Hobbesianism against the historical or quasi-historical account, and his determination to criticise the former before he has explained its socio-historical importance. For that reason it may be argued that Shaftesbury tries to do too much here, allowing historical explanation and moral criticism to dull the impact of what might otherwise have been taken as an important insight into the nature of beliefs in his society and the changes that had occurred in belief in the preceding century.

The problem for Shaftesbury was that he, too, fell in line with the Hobbesians in attacking the dominant religious and moral strains. Shaftesbury therefore tried to moderate his dislike of their particular views, the selfish philosophy, when attending to the importance of their general scepticism. He approved some of their ends if not always their arguments:

'The reason perhaps, why men of wit delight so much to espouse these paradoxical systems, is not in truth that they are so fully satisfied with them, but in a view the better to oppose some other systems, which by their fair appearance have helped, they think, to bring mankind under subjection. They imagine that by this general scepticism, which they would introduce, they shall better deal with the dogmatical spirit which prevails in some particular subjects And when they have accustomed men to bear contradiction in the main, and hear the nature of things disputed at large, it may be safer (they conclude) to argue separately upon

certain nice points in which they are not altogether so well satisfied. So that from hence, perhaps, you may still better apprehend why, in conversation, the spirit of raillery prevails so much, and notions are taken up for no reason besides their being odd and out of the way.' 22

The purpose of the discussion is to clear the way for a more specific presentation of his own views. It is also allowing Shaftesbury to make critical comment upon contemporary views. In doing this he inclines to the Hobbists' 'general scepticism' because it is in his own strategic interest to do so. There is, however, a reflection of his personal development in that he had passed through, or been in close contact with, scepticism in the broad sense of doubts about claims made by certain interest groups in society, especially the Church, and in the particular sense of philosophical scepticism as demonstrated by Pierre Bayle.

The particular dimension of 'socialisation' of philosophy, is to be seen when Shaftesbury assesses the likely impact of Hobbesian thought. Shaftesbury says that he feels no 'apprehension' from this kind of thinking:

'Men indeed may, in a serious way, be so wrought on and confounded, by different modes of opinion, different systems and schemes imposed by authority, that they may wholly lose all notion or comprehension of truth. I can easily apprehend what effect awe has over men's understandings. I can very well suppose men frightened out of their wits, but I can have no apprehension they should be laughed out of them I can hardly imagine that in a pleasant way they should ever be talked out of their love for society, or reasoned out of humanity and common sense. A mannerly wit can hurt no cause or interest for which I am in the least concerned; and philosophical specul-

22. Characteristics 1, 65. The last sentence exemplifies the further complication introduced by Shaftesbury's need to stand on common ground with his readers, to remark what they would have observed, and to demonstrate the shared experience which would help justify his prescriptions as being applicable to his readers.

ations, politely managed, can never surely render mankind more unsociable or uncivilised.' 23

Virtue, and by implication social morality and the moral fabric, is seen by Shaftesbury to be threatened more by its supposed defenders than by its alleged critics. The defenders of virtue have not been content to praise it for itself, but have been led on to provide incentives to belief, which have the effect of diminishing virtue in itself.

'Men have not been contented to show the natural advantages of honesty and virtue, They have rather lessened these, the better, as they thought to advance another foundation. They have made virtue so mercenary a thing and have talked so much of its rewards, that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, which can be worth rewarding. For to be bribed only or terrified into an honest practice, bespeaks little of real honesty or practice. 24

In case his readers are failing to identify the men who have depreciated virtue, and tried to make it a means rather than an end, Shaftesbury points out that private friendship, 'zeal for the public and our country' are virtues 'purely voluntary' in a Christian.

The reward of virtue is much as Hume described in his account of the Stoic: Shaftesbury says that if there is any reward for the patriot or thorough friend 'this is still behind the curtain', that is, the reward is possible but by its uncertainty virtue for its own sake is encouraged.

Shaftesbury spoke of his hinting in his critical treatises of his having a more positive doctrine to advocate. Clearly this brief

treatment of virtue 'its own reward' is one such suggesting passage. It is significant in that it shows how closely Shaftesbury could integrate his critical and more positive contribution. This, naturally enough, becomes less clear in the Inquiry and the Moralists where the emphasis is placed upon the more positive strain in his thinking. Concentration upon the last two treatises has tended to obscure the social dimension of Shaftesbury's thought which would have been clear to the perceptive contemporary.²⁵

In the next part of the Essay Shaftesbury begins by once again establishing a framework for the discussion of morals in the social sense. Some of his difficulties derive from his unwillingness to speak in the usual categories of particular/individual or general/universal that are more familiar in discussions of morals. He is not overtly delivering either a prescriptive or descriptive account of what the individual does in practice and in thought when he acts morally. Shaftesbury does consider this later, though we should beware of aligning him with more 'individualist' writers such as Kant. Shaftesbury is also reluctant to maintain his discourse in the context of a descriptive account of what all men do, the macroethical. Shaftesbury tends to work within these poles, and this is

25. In a progression this brings us to the end of the second part of the Essay. It is worth remarking then, that Shaftesbury seems to have had some difficulty with this section, as mentioned above. In part this derives from his wish to pursue a sapping method, to change the line of approach from time to time, and in part it derives from his lack of success in defining the proper limits of such lines, and their respective interdependences. An unfavourable critic would say that the end result was to create the impression that Shaftesbury was not really in control of his arguments, that the juxtaposition was haphazard and failed to evidence any design.

something that needs to be clarified before we can understand how he operates.

In particular his next passage begins, apparently inconsequentially, (after the sapping method) with a discussion of what Juvenal meant when he discussed the ethics of the Roman Court under Augustus. Juvenal had written of the infrequency of the occurrence of 'sensus communis' among the courtiers. It will be recalled that the Essay's full title was 'Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour.'²⁶ 'Sensus Communis' had been translated as 'common Sense' or sense of the common good. A recent translator, renders 'respect for others'.²⁷ Shaftesbury concedes that there is something in the second sense.

It will be argued here that Shaftesbury is in fact engaged in justifying the Characteristics as a whole. We have seen one statement of purpose, that concerning the role of wit in polite society. There the Essay is seen as a contribution towards the introduction of serious speculative discourse to the 'polite society'. Here, the statement is less clear, the emphasis more moral and even ideological. Shaftesbury was attending to philosophy and the political world.

The analogy with contemporaries was there for his readers to draw. Shaftesbury spoke of the morals of the Roman Courtiers. He wrote of their lack of public spirit, of the prevalence of self-

26. '...printed for Egbert Sanger at the Post Office in Fleet Street'. We may note that it was not printed by Darby, Shaftesbury's printer and bookseller.

27. Juvenal, The Sixteen Satires translated with an introduction and notes, by Peter Green (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974) p 179

interestedness among the courtiers, and the absence of any sense of the public between the Emperor and his subjects. He reflected upon the effects of a court education: and he countered these evils with the following thought:

'A public spirit can come only from a social feeling or sense of partnership with human kind. Now there are none so far from being partners in this sense, or sharers in this common affection, as they who scarcely know an equal, nor consider themselves as subject to any law of fellowship or community. And thus morality and good government go together. There is no real love of virtue, without the knowledge of public good. And where absolute power is, there is no public.' 28

Set against the political background of the time, Shaftesbury's discussion can be seen to be more than a critique of absolutism by analogy, which is what might otherwise have been inferred. Shaftesbury is standing, not against inclinations to absolutism by either William or Anne, but against those in favour of a strengthened prerogative and royal power. He is also prepared to point to what he regarded as the dangers of a court. In doing this, he can be seen to counter the Tories, who favoured the assertion of the prerogative after the accession of Anne, and to be delivering a more general warning, in sympathy with Commonwealth sentiments, against the aristocratic courtiers losing sight of the wider interest of the country. The emphasis at this point falls more upon the countering of the views associated with the Tories, those who favour absolutist principles.

Naturally, Shaftesbury determined to praise the British system. He was perhaps a little too enthusiastic, although it could be argued

that he distinguished current practice from current wishes. From analogy he moved through ideology to political philosophy.

' As for us Britons, thank Heaven, we have a better sense of government delivered to us from our ancestors. We have a notion of a public and a constitution; how a legislative and how an executive is modelled. We understand wight and measure in this kind, and can reason justly on the balance of power and property. The maxims we draw from hence, are as evident as those in mathematics. Our increasing knowledge shows us every day, more and more, what common sense is in politics; and this must of necessity lead us to understand a like sense in morals, which is the foundation.' 29

Forming a counterpoint to the attack on the intellectual captivity and cozening of man which was the cause of the general scepticism of Hobbesian thought, Shaftesbury turns ~~from~~ the particular morals of the courtier to the moral basis of government. At least, his subsequent attack upon individualist morality as expressed through 'state of nature' arguments in political philosophy, may be seen as such, though it is difficult to resist the conclusion that is less favourable to the author, namely that he had used his method to strike up connections between subjects that were only tenuously related.

The political philosophy that he chooses to examine was not the Tory view of Filmerism, the exploded Patriarchalism with which Locke and Algernon Sidney had been concerned. This would have appeared to a tolerable target for one with Shaftesbury's views, but its diminished force appears to have allowed him to look elsewhere and consider what he thought to be error in another place. As

29. Characteristics i, 73. My italics, the intention being to highlight some of the conceptual framework of discussion of political philosophy, and separately to point to 'common sense' as having a different connotation at this point.

the Hobbesian thinkers had over-reacted against the exaggerated claims made for virtue, so he thinks the 'state of nature' theorists, whose source was Hobbes, also had been led into error by their misinterpretation of the nature and motivation of man.

Political society he says, is supposed to have been based upon a promise made when man was in the state of nature. If this promise is to be seen as binding, and it was made in this state of nature, then argues Shaftesbury, there must have been some obligation attached to promises before society was formed; there was natural morality. If promise-keeping was possible, then so were many of the other moral acts, such as those of humanity, keeping faith, justice, honesty and virtue. All these could exist in the pre-social age. So that, to say with the contract/compact theorists of society, that amoral man becomes moral when he enters society but not before, is, to Shaftesbury, to present an inadequate explanation. It is inadequate concerning the origins of civil society, of government and of morals.

This is not merely anti-Hobbes, but it is also anti-Lockean. It might be argued that Shaftesbury's argument is not sufficiently detailed or fair to represent either of these authors' true views on the state of nature, nor to distinguish between what they saw as an explanatory hypothesis, or a conjecture which served a purpose, and what Shaftesbury and others have taken to be a literal historical account. For our purposes, it is sufficient to remark a difference of opinion which would have been noticeable to contemporaries, which would suggest that prevalent rationales of society based upon contracts, were not dominating contemporary debate to the

exclusion of all others.

Shaftesbury concentrates upon another aspect of the question, namely what it is that is being called natural. Shaftesbury is prepared to make his own contribution to this:

' "That if anything be natural, in any creature or any kind, 'tis that which is preservative of the kind itself, and conducing to its welfare and support." 30

Shaftesbury then argues naturalistically: if eating and drinking are natural, then so is herding; there is affection between the sexes and affection in the family; there is affection in the family and hence affection in the tribe. He asks rhetorically why men have so puzzled (i.e. confused) the matter, and have made it a matter of design (i.e. intention). Shaftesbury was undermining one view, the contract theory, but as yet was unprepared to formulate in full an alternative. The implications of a naturalistic account, would tend to endorse the status quo, since it could be argued that it evidenced the intention of nature, and this was a conclusion that Shaftesbury does not seem to have been willing to commit himself to. The tendency of such a passage, might be to halt the progress of contract theory whilst not providing an alternative; and if contract theory is seen as a necessary part of Whig ideology, then Shaftesbury must be seen as lying outside the mainstream in this respect.

In support of his naturalistic account, Shaftesbury continues to argue from what happened. Although family affection is easily brought about, affection for the tribe is less immediate and affection

for the species even more remote. In consequence, men have mistaken the universal good. They have found it easier to form groups within the whole to pursue their particular objectives. In this way, conflicts arise.

All men have some share of the herding instinct. Unfortunately, their instincts are not always directed by 'right reason', and this leads to their forming groups whose ends are antipathetic to the whole or universal good. Ironically, it is the persons most endowed with the herding instinct who are foremost in such groups. Here Shaftesbury may have had in his mind the turbulent career of his grandfather, or the censured Junto leaders of the 1690s.

He considers also the circumstances in which this instinct is to be found:

'Nor is the passion anywhere so strongly felt or so vigorously exerted as in actual conspiracy or war; in which the highest geniuses are often known the forwardest to employ themselves. For the most generous spirits are the most combining. They delight most to move in concert, and feel (if I may say so) in the strongest manner the force of the confederating charm.

'Tis strange to imagine that war, which of all things appears the most savage, should be the passion of the most heroic spirits. But 'tis in war that the knot of fellowship is closest drawn' 31

There is in nature then, a tendency for subdivisions and groups to form; to form cabals, parties or to 'cantonise', in the language of the time. Shaftesbury writes of the tendency of strong nations to establish colonies as being motivated by internal security as

31. Characteristics i, 75-6. This passage seems to anticipate something of the sentiments of the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, Adam Ferguson.

much as by external threat or ambition. Vast empires he says, are in many respects unnatural because government is in the hands of a few, ~~the~~ connection between chief magistrate and the people over-extended, and a breeding ground for faction is set up.

One form of faction is the associating spirit which makes possible the formation of religious societies and orders. They result in ~~be~~neficial social actions sometimes being performed for the wrong motives. It is possible that here too, Shaftesbury was looking about the contemporary scene and viewing the arrival of religious 'Societies' unfavourably.

It would seem that there is here the rudimentary elements of some kind of political philosophy, and political science. The indications being that the latter would have been applicable to small states rather than imperial ~~power~~s. However, Shaftesbury admits that it is not his intention to write out such a programme in the next section where speaking of his not setting out a 'formal scheme of the passions' he may be taken as rejecting the logically consequent political philosophy also. In fact, Shaftesbury would prefer at this point to stick to his task of assailing the citadel of established views and this is what he continues to do.

Writing loosely around the concept of interest he attacks reductionist theories which seek to explain all in terms of self-interest. There is a need for a balancing item he feels and admits that this he cannot supply in a letter. So instead he criticises Epicurus, Rochester, and Hobbes, as exponents of the self-interest theory. The former is distinguished in that he urged men to avoid love of country, if they sought to pursue their self-interest, while the later thinkers, encompassed all human behaviour in terms of

self-interest and left little room for moral choice. Such is the basis of Shaftesbury's attack. His charge to the Hobbesian thinkers and their imitators, follows that he levelled in the 'state of nature' context, only this time he asks, not 'what do they mean by nature?' but 'what do they mean by self-interest?'.

Shaftesbury goes so far as to suggest that with an adequate definition of self-interest, happiness, and good, moral argument could be continued. The matter of debate being the means rather than the ends. For the present he is unwilling to go further and closes his case with a reflection upon what is involved in a Hobbesian life, without honesty, natural affection, sociableness. He points to the fact that self-preservation at all costs may lead to a base and villianous life.

He then turns to the relevance of philosophy to society. Contemporary philosophy and philosophers he had no high opinion of, as we might expect after the attacks in the preceding parts of the Essay. A good poet and an 'honest historian' will furnish all the learning requisite for a young gentleman according to Shaftesbury. Traditionally, the noble youth of a state was sent to stay with philosophers, where he learned of self-discipline, but this is not likely to be the case now:

'I am sensible that of old'twas the custom to send the youth of highest quality to philosophers to be formed. 'Twas in their schools, in their company, and by their precepts and example that the illustrious pupils were inured to hardship and exercised in the severest courses of temperance and self-denial. By such an early discipline they were fitted for the command of others; to maintain their country's honour in war, rule wisely in the State, and fight against luxury and corruption in times of prosperity and peace. If any of these arts are comprehended in university learning, 'tis well.

But as some universities in the world are now modelled, they seem not so very effectual to these purposes, nor so fortunate in preparing for a right practice of the world or a just knowledge of men and things.' 32

This passage gives an intimation of what Shaftesbury thought constituted a good education and the proper role of philosophy, in the process of education. It does not embrace all his vision for the discipline of philosophy, for as we have seen he hoped to make ready the way for the introduction of speculative discourse among friends in private places. This last was almost a function of fashion, though opposed by the authority of those in whose interest lay the continued intellectual captivity of man. The former, the role of philosophy in learning, shows Shaftesbury in Enlightenment fashion, using the standards of Classical ages against those of his own time. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge would provide a much more recognisable identity for his reader, than a plea for the freedom of wit and humour in society. Moreover, as seed-beds for supporters of Church and State principles, of the Toryism of the future, Shaftesbury would find little difficulty in opposing them and maintaining at the same time his philosophical detachment. Philosophy was both critical and constructive.

Shaftesbury then reaffirms his commitment against the prevalent hedonist viewpoint which saw virtue displaced by pleasure as man's ultimate moral end. Pleasure is not identified with happiness but with sensual excitements of a pleasing kind. He adds a passage on the desirability of avoiding nastiness when nobody is present which is akin to a passage in the Discourses of Epictetus.³³ These

33. Epictetus, Discourses IV. 11.

intimations of a different code of practice are continued into the sphere of morality and public life:

' I know very well that many services to the public are done merely for the sake of a gratuity; and that informers in particular are to be taken care of and sometimes made pensioners of State. But I must beg pardon for the particular thoughts I may have of these gentlemen's merit; and shall never bestow my esteem on any other than the voluntary discoverers of villainy and hearty prosecutor's of their country's interest, And in this respect, I know nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important accusation, by which some high criminal of State, or some formed body of conspirators against the public, may be arraigned and brought to punishment through the honest zeal and public affection of a private man.' 34

Virtue is to be the end of Shaftesbury's philosophy rather than pleasure. It has to be undertaken for its own sake and not for the sake of some ulterior reward, such as a pension from the state. Shaftesbury admits, or concedes that the gallows may in fact be necessary for the vulgar in order to et them to pursue the right road. This is not necessary in 'any man of a liberal education or common honesty'.

34. Characteristics i, 84. This is an unusual passage in a work that tends to argue against persecution. It would appear to have anticipated the trial of Sacheverell which would, perhaps, have accorded with Shaftesbury's Whig principles, if not with his sense of practical politics. The prosecution on that occasion was not 'private'. Other such cases could have been the Sir John Fenwick prosecution, the attack on the MPs Duncombe and Knight, in the 1690s, though the former is doubtful. Shaftesbury's grandfather was subjected to persecution from authority on such grounds but this too seems an unlikely link. If Somers were the man in Shaftesbury's mind when the writer put down these views there may have been other occasions in the Lord Chancellor's legal career. Nevertheless, apart from a strong sense of 'corruption' in public life, the identity of the particular that occasioned this passage, if there was one at all, must remain for the present unknown.

Shaftesbury continues to assess the practical implications of what he is advocating in the next part of the Essay, and clearly this is a necessary undertaking in any such enterprise which involves what has been called here the socialisation of philosophy. In order that Shaftesbury can make philosophy more of a social activity, it is necessary for him to indicate to his reader what there is about philosophy that has appeal for the reader, and also what there appears to be associated with philosophy but which is not truly part of it. In other words, Shaftesbury has to identify false forms of philosophy as well as the true form. In doing this, in accordance with his chosen method, Shaftesbury has from time to time to give an indication of what sort of readership he is hoping to reach. One such indication is given in the reference to the necessity of the gallows in order to keep the vulgar in some sort of moral order. More indications are given in this closing section, and they are of especial interest to the historian of ideas in their cultural contexts because they help to define the nature of that society in which Shaftesbury moved and to which he addressed himself.

Shaftesbury's man is an intuitive type rather than a thinking man. Stated thus baldly, this would seem to reflect poorly upon an author whose profession was to allow speculative exchanges to be transacted more frequently, but from time to time, Shaftesbury adopts the position of anti-intellectual:

' A man of thorough good-breeding, whatever else he be, is incapable of doing a rude or brutal action. He never deliberates in this case, or considers of the matter by prudential rules of self interest and advantage. He acts from his nature, in a manner necessarily, and without reflection; and if he did not, it were impossible for him to answer his character, or be

found that truly well-bred man on every occasion.
'Tis the same with the honest man.' 35

The moral man instinctively refuses those temptations to which others are drawn. He refuses the 'plum', the place or political bribe. This character is to be associated with the man who acts virtuously for the sake of virtue, of which Shaftesbury had written before.

Shaftesbury then inserts a passage which is not out of line, but slightly at odds with what he has been saying. I believe his motivation to have been more personal, and that the passage reflects his private experience as much as the public voice of the moralist. He writes of the need to avoid baseness in itself and because of its consequences. The consequences take us back to the Shaftesbury of the notebooks and the years in Holland.

'He who would enjoy freedom of mind, and be truly the possessor of himself, must be above the thought of stooping to what is villainous or base...' 36

So far, this seems unremarkable though a little unforgiving. Its uniqueness to Shaftesbury comes when he says that the consistent villain is closer to happiness than the inconsistent man who attempts to behave morally:

'Yet had we sense we should consider 'tis in reality the thorough profligate knave, the very complete unnatural villain alone, who can any way bid for

35. Characteristics i, 86. The well-bred man, in fact, is slightly lower in the hierarchy of men than the moral and honest man. Morality is at the acme of good-breeding, but this is a question which will be looked at more closely in subsequent chapters as Shaftesbury's views on the social role of moral man evolve. It will be remembered that his account of the origins of society emphasises affection and instinct rather than reason.

36. Characteristics, i, 86.

happiness with the honestman. True interest is wholly on one side or the other. All between is inconsistency, irresolution, remorse, vexation, and an ague fit: from hot to cold; from one passion to another quite contrary; a perpetual discord of life; and an alternate disquiet and self-dislike. The only rest or repose must be through one determined, considerate resolution, which when once taken must be courageously kept; and the passions and affections brought under obedience to it; the temper steeled and hardened to the mind; the disposition to the judgment. Both must agree, else all must be disturbance and confusion.' 37

This is set in a context wherein Shaftesbury wishes to argue on behalf of simple honesty and against the sophistry of contemporary philosophers and deep speculations, which are more likely to lead a man out of the right path than along it. This is an echo of the views that he expressed to Locke as early as 1694 about the state of philosophy and the point of new discoveries. His conclusions are:

'Men's first thoughts in this matter are generally better than their second: their natural notions better than those refined by study or consultation with casuists.' 38

Shaftesbury does not deny that gains are made by immoral behaviour; estate, high office, gains for friends, even a crown may be the result of acting upon the advice of specious speculation and contemporary philosopher. The consequence has been that the natural morality of man is corrupted and principles of peace and human love have been distorted into mutual hatred of man, and malignant persecution.

Shaftesbury had written earlier of the place of philosophy in the education of noble youths and the readers might be forgiven for thinking that the Essay was written after the fashion of a Prince or

37. Ibid., i, 87.

38. Ibid., i, 88.

Book of the Courtier for the sons of the aristocracy of post-revolutionary England. This is a possible interpretation but Shaftesbury's wider intention is made clear in this last part. Here he says, that his is going to appeal to the men of fashion. So far such men have been unimpressed by the gloomy approaches of the moralist and the censures of the zealous. Shaftesbury hopes to ridicule them into morality.³⁹

Who are these men of fashion? Shaftesbury answers:

'By gentlemen of fashion, I understand those to whom a natural good genius, or the force of good education, has given a sense of what is naturally graceful and becoming. Some by mere nature, others by art and practice, are masters of an ear in music an eye in painting, a fancy in the ordinary things of ornament and grace, a judgment in proportion of all kinds, and a general good taste in most of those subjects which make the amusement and delight of the ingenious people of the world.' 40

It is Shaftesbury's intention that these men, who manifest their appreciation of the various external forms of beauty, should be led on to a further appreciation of that which lies behind.⁴¹ Our concern, however, is not primarily with the internal consistency and character of Shaftesburean theory here, but with the important fact that there appears to have been a shift in focus, from the original noble youth, to a less specific readership, namely all those gentlemen with some degree of 'taste'. Envisaging a heirarchical model of society, it is possible to say that Shaftesbury has lowered his aim a gradation. Using a slightly different model, it is possible to intimate that the original ideas, the stoic hints

39. Characteristics. i, 89

40. Ibid.

41. See the discussion of Shaftesbury's aesthetic in Tiffany, op.cit., pp 647-652.

about virtue, have been replaced by a more urban and less feudal background, and that by 'gentlemen of fashion' Shaftesbury is identifying in a non-depreciatory way, a group in society, whose function is not as yet defined by their use, but who stand unsteadily at the borders of what was to be called an intelligentsia.*

This is developed somewhat in the Soliloquy. Part of Shaftesbury's definitional problems of identifying authors painters etc. is that they lack a shared economic base, i.e. they are not all professionals but include a large number of amateurs, whose amateurism is not thought to exclude them from the group, and similarly lacked a shared institutional base.

The implications are more wide reaching than may at first sight appear, in that Shaftesbury's 'enemy' is to a great degree institutionalised, in the Church, the Universities, and so forth, whereas his hypothesised friends or potential converts are spread about, pre-social almost. If Shaftesbury is thought of as appealing to those who would like to join with him, out of like-mindedness, then it is possible to see different stages that such an association of the like-minded would have to pass through, the different stages having an increasing formality or institutional quality. The process would be like the formation of a new professional body, which starts out informally, proceeds to acquire a charter or register itself, and then prescribes qualifications necessary for entrance, and lastly,

* Despite its unhistorical character, intelligentsia, defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, 5th edition, as 'that part of a nation that aspires to independent thinking', seemed best fitted as a descriptive term to suggest what Shaftesbury sought to establish.

produces its own qualification. Shaftesbury was, we may say, at the beginning of this process, making soundings.

Here it may be added that, of the wider social grouping permitted to refer to themselves as 'gentlemen' (a description Locke seems to have regarded with some propriety in his own case, and which was by no means mere courtesy), Shaftesbury identified a sub-group 'gentlemen of fashion' whereas his initial appeal appears to have been exclusively to the nobility, a class over and above the gentry.

Increasingly, Shaftesbury appears to have had before his mind's eye, a readership of gentlemen of taste rather than 'illustrious youth'. There is however, always a tension, and it can be said that towards the close of his life, in his Letter Concerning Design (1712) he had, once more before him, the noble youth of the next generation as the model to which he addressed his efforts.

At a more general level, this slight blurring of focus, this ambiguity, may be seen as evidencing something of Shaftesbury's own bridging position between the aristocratic, ordered, hierarchical world of the Court, where precedent and tradition form part of established mores, and the emergent world of the gentlemen, no longer tied to their middling estates between noble and yeoman, but active in the metropolis, men of the town, the citizenry (but not mere 'cits') backed by land, who moved among the club life and coffee houses, relatively independent of their economic base.

Again, this is a problem area to which Shaftesbury was to return. In the now familiar manner, the reader no longer expects all of the author's thoughts upon a subject to be found in one place,

and certainly this is not the case when such thoughts are rather suggestions that have to be drawn from Shaftesbury's writing by inference.

Characterising his men of fashion by reference to their shared aesthetic sense, albeit expressed in regard to different objects and different orders of beauty, Shaftesbury can prepare a new approach the more constructive and more social philosophy that he has hinted of on previous occasions. The two closing sections of the Essay are centred upon the identification of beauty as the object of the pursuits of gentlemen of fashion.

The most effective form of beauty, he argues, is that which derives from real life, and from the passions. This is illustrated by considerations of the poet, the lover, and of men of cooler passions, those who find pleasure in building houses, gardens and plantations. The springs or sources of such pleasures are the same, in all cases:

'The venustum, the honestum, the decorum of things, will force its way.' 42

Shaftesbury establishes that the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth: in architecture, poetry, painting, and narrative or historical truth. In discussing these expressions of beauty and truth Shaftesbury is forced to reflect that unhappily, all attempts in these areas do not attest the success of their authors, particularly the last.

In part, the views expressed here by Shaftesbury derive from that period in his life when he returned from Holland and began to

study literary principles more closely, presumably with a view to forming a literary career. He refers to the critical works of Aristotle and Horace, which may be regarded as basic to Shaftesbury's critical appreciation of his own task. His comments upon historical or narrative writing are however, particularly interesting, as suggesting that he had contemplated that kind of activity himself.

'Narrative or historical truth must needs be highly estimable; especially when we consider how mankind, who are become so deeply interested in the subject, have suffered by the want of clearness in it. 'Tis itself a part of moral truth. To be a judge in one, requires a judgment in the other. The morals, the character, and the genius of an author must be thoroughly considered; and the historian or relator of things important to mankind must, whoever he be, approve himself many ways to us, both in respect of his judgment, candour and disinterestedness, ere we are bound to take anything on his authority. And as for critical truth, or the judgment and determination of what commentators, translators, paraphrasts, grammarians and others have, on this occasion delivered to us; in the midst of such variety of style, such different readings, such interpolations and corruptions in the originals: such mistakes of copyists, transcribers, editors, and a hundred such accidents to which ancient books are subject; it becomes on the whole, a matter of nice speculation ...' 43

In fact it is so nice that Shaftesbury has moved quietly from narrative, to a discussion of critical exegesis of the classical text, and behind this lies an implication in respect of revealed religion, for in the ancient text is unreliable, that becomes of the scriptural books? Shaftesbury, we see, does not have contemporary chroniclers or historians like Abel Boyer, before his mind, but is obliquely referring to a rather different question.

Shaftesbury is critical also of those who would equate truth

with the opinion of the greatest number, after the fashion of 'counting noses'. Again this critical opinion is not to be seen as an abstract reflection upon the relation of truth and majority opinion. Supporters of what Shaftesbury had termed superstition would assert their beliefs by reference to the fact that such beliefs were shared by many others, perhaps a majority of mankind. Shaftesbury's response establishes him firmly outside the democratic camp in this respect and firmly against any idealisation of rustic virtues:

'Religion, no doubt, is much indebted to these men of prodigy, who, in such a discerning age, would set her on the foot of popular tradition, and venture her on the same bottom with parish tales, and gossiping stories of imps, goblins, and ~~diabolical~~ diabolical pranks, invented to fright children, or make practice for common exorcists and "cunning men"! For by that name you know, country people are used to call those dealers in mystery who are thought to conjure in an honest way, and foil the devil at his own weapon.' 44

Shaftesbury closes the Essay with the hope that he has moralised in a tolerable manner without cant and according to 'common sense'. On these terms he is prepared to be criticised, nor does he fear from the purveyors of a severer type of moral censure. These 'zealots' have of late, had their talons pared by the magistrate, says Shaftesbury. At the close then, he is not far away from the world for which he was writing.

44. Characteristics p98. On the country theme (and Shaftesbury for the most part of his life regarded the country as a backwater, an intellectual and cultural desert) there existed the Horatian view which akin to Pope, envisaged the retreat from the overcrowded town, to the villa. Where ruralisation was carried so far and no further, and which tended to idealise after the manner of pastoral. This should not be confused with the later Romantic ethic of appreciating the wildness and vagaries of nature for their own sake. Shaftesbury tended to use Nature in this area as evidence for the argument from Design to support a natural religion. The discussion of the finer points, however, will not be brought into question here: for the basic distinction between neo-Classical and Romantic, a sine non qua, see I.R. F. Gordon, A Preface to Pope (London: Longmans. 1976) pp 53-58.

Toward the end of the Essay Shaftesbury's interest appears to have undergone a shift more significant than the customary and familiar tack to be found in the 'sapping method'. There is a sense that the focus of his attention has changed. To a degree, this is evident in the implied target audience. However, the matter is perhaps broader in scope. Shaftesbury has done with the 'zealots', the aggressive spokesmen for the established Church, whom he has attacked in the Letter and the Essay. The attention now turns to the artistic and cultural world, to the intelligentsia and their critical standards.

Two points need to be made. In the first place, this shift would fall in line with the personal development of the author as he had taken increasingly particular care with the preparation of the Moralists, his own positive contribution to philosophy and literature, in contrast to the dependent critical pieces the Letter and the Essay. Secondly, that this was of the nature of a shift rather than a complete change of focus. Shaftesbury was not for long unmindful of the men with black gowns and pens. He returned to the attack in the Miscellaneous Reflections, and reflected the resurgence of Anglican sentiment about the time of the Sacheverell trial.

A further significant change is that which suggests that he became increasingly convinced of his inability to change the morality of the age, and therefore aimed at influencing the next age. His personal motivation, of frustration and contempt which a moral man might find in a world in which only immorality seemed to prosper, the 'angst' of the 1690s gave way from the middle of the next decade to a more quiet, a calmer acceptance view. This was on the personal

level, and should not be identified with the 'optimism' which is usually seen in Shaftesbury's philosophy, and about which there was an element of the 'public face' of the Stoic. There was, too, the change in his views brought about by changed personal circumstances, his marriage, and his removal from Chelsea to Reigate.

The Essay even allowing for the technical impact achieved by the author's method, evidences some of these changes and suggests composition at discrete intervals. The last sections are particularly removed from the tenor of the earlier sections, and the belief that there had been fundamental changes in the attitude of the author, is supported by his writing the published version of the Moralists (Dec. to Jan. 1709), before the Essay (Mid-1709) and thereafter composing the bridging piece the Soliloquy (1710).

These considerations are important if an assessment of the Essay is to be made. Here we may attempt a partial summation of Shaftesbury's critical enterprise, the Letter and the Essay being taken together. They represent the main burden, in Shaftesbury's attempt to undermine established and prevalent views. Such views derived from two sources: the religious source, the established Church or its predecessors which had wrought the intellectual captivity of man; and the anti-establishment Hobbesian philosophy, which understandable in its origins represented an unacceptable course. Shaftesbury was to steer his course between the social stranglehold of the one, and the intellectual domination of the other. It may be argued that they could not have been successfully juxtaposed by any other than Shaftesbury; that may be so. To a degree that he may himself have been unaware of, Shaftesbury had

set up in antithesis, the representation of an organic hierarchical society, the Church model, and the representation of competitive society, the Hobbesian world, Shaftesbury saw their conflict expressed through the dimension of morals and motivation. Their conflict might now be termed ideological. Shaftesbury, an 18th century Horace insofar as he, too, was standing at the interstices of doctrine, perceived the moral dimension of conflict, and sought a third course.

However, as Shaftesbury demonstrates, it is necessary also to move this discussion along a less abstract plane. What sort of a view of society emerges from Shaftesbury's critical picture? It was a society with intellectual deficiencies, as we might expect from a philosopher, but one which manifested these in a practical way. Shaftesbury is concerned with the social dimension as well as with the intellectual dimension.

The state of contemporary learning was contributing actively to the erosion and corruption of society. Philosophical instruction, where it was at all applicable, was applicable because based on self-interest theory, which served to undermine the good of the whole. Hobbesianism led by implication to a false social theory, the pursuit of self-interest and to corruption in political life. There was a lack of public spirit (sensus communis), a lack of virtú. Shaftesbury inclines to merge the Stoic and the Epicurean as he moves away from the political setting. The state of learning appears a mare's nest for the latter and Shaftesbury is hard pushed when describing the critical requirements of historical learning not to produce a deterrent effect. The herding instinct perhaps is found in the univer-

sities, where a small group can become vociferous and falsely identify its own interest with the national interest. Such an inference would at least have been possible for the reader of the Essay.

Complementing the manifestly deplorable state of institutionalised learning, came the matter of uniformity of opinion. The attempts to impose this, and we may regard the universities as ~~having~~ been in the forefront of such a move, have led to 'false wit', coarse raillery and generally to 'low' forms of humour. Moreover, an active support by the magistrate, whether in supporting the Church through penal laws against Dissent, or in encouraging the superstitions of country people, has exacerbated the problem. Shaftesbury implies the need for less active magistracy at the local level as well as the national. Moreover, the intensity of discussion of religious questions is itself socially divisive. On the other hand, Shaftesbury admits the need for a gallows for the vulgar, a National Church, and the need to conceal strong truths. Shaftesbury's via media is as yet unmapped. What he was seeking was a consistent philosophy which could exist within a strain situation. It is to his attempt to construct such a view, whilst maintaining his occasional sallies at the citadel, that our attention is now directed.

CHAPTER EIGHT.SOLILOQUY: THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY.

The socialisation of philosophy required the creation of an environment in which reasoning and speculative exchange could flourish. Shaftesbury had therefore, to suggest ways in which this environment could be created. He had also to assist in the creation of such an environment, to establish its framework or character. The critical function, which the Letter and the Essay can be seen to have been performing, was continued in the next treatise in the Characteristics. This was the Soliloquy: or Advice to an Author. However, Shaftesbury changed the emphasis and, superficially, the intended audience. The Soliloquy is also a statement of a method of philosophising for the individual. As such, it is crucially important for a consideration of Shaftesbury as a philosopher, and especially interesting as an indication of his views on what was required of contemporaries if the socialisation of philosophy was to be brought about, and critical standards raised.

In this chapter we shall adopt the same method as before, of tracking Shaftesbury's multi-directional arguments, and prefacing or supplementing them where appropriate in order to highlight their contribution to the overall purpose of the Characteristics, the socialisation of philosophy. Attention will be paid to those areas which might particularly have attracted contemporaries, but which have since appeared to be of less signification. On the other side of this, those passages where Shaftesbury seems to have intended a particular appeal to the collective minds of his readers, will be

suggested as being of especial relevance in revealing to us the mind of the author.

Some further brief preliminary remarks are necessary. The Soliloquy appears in the Characteristics after the Essay but before the Moralists. Yet we know that the Moralists in an early draft was completed in 1705, and published in what was near to ~~its~~ final form in 1709. Why then did Shaftesbury alter the order of appearance in the Characteristics? He did so because he required a connecting treatise between the critical Essay and the more original and constructive philosophy of the Moralists. The Soliloquy was to perform this part.

Secondly, the changes in intention that have been suggested for the Essay, appear also in the Soliloquy. Superficially, Shaftesbury no longer addresses the men of fashion, less so the noble youth, but instead addresses himself to authors, poets, painters. Although this is, as we shall see, discountable to some degree, it does represent a movement in Shaftesbury's own interests. As he developed his skills as a writer and gained in confidence, Shaftesbury naturally became interested in critical principles per se, and not merely as a means to assist him in an unfamiliar situation. This has been noticed in respect of the closing sections of the Essay. In the Soliloquy the trend is continued.

Thirdly, although the Soliloquy does not have the 'formality' of a structured argument as does the Inquiry nor the unity caught by the narrative and dialogue of the Moralists, it has a philosophical content which, because it is unfamiliar with subsequent traditions and ~~fashions~~ among British philosophers, is easily overlooked.

Although it is not part of our purpose to argue this case fully, it may be remarked especially as some other writings seem not to have realised the important centrality of the Soliloquy, representing the link between the philosopher and his society. The Soliloquy involves the practice of philosophy for the purpose of the public exercise of its benefits.

Fourthly, because of Shaftesbury's stated intention to bring philosophy out of the monkish cell where it had languished, it may be argued that in understanding what Shaftesbury would have regarded as important to this purpose, greater weight should be given to the treatise that illustrates how philosophy should be practised, and less weight to the two particular illustrations of a particular philosophical scheme. Thus we have a paradox between the overall purpose, the social intention of Shaftesbury, expressed in the Soliloquy, which was to have been of lasting importance to his readers or the next generation; and, on the other hand, the 'original', Shaftesburean philosophy, what is here called the constructive phase, of the Inquiry and the Moralists which falling into more readily recognisable classifications (i.e. it is closer to institutionalised 'philosophy' than other parts of the Characteristics) has, by the judgment of successors, come to appear fundamental to the Characteristics, the philosophical spine about which the rest of the work turns. Here, we have been, and are, concerned to consider Shaftesbury's intentions and his audience at the time at which the wrote, and it is therefore necessary to note this development. We are not saying that the Soliloquy is philosophically more important

than the two later treatises in the Characteristics, but that there is a case, worthy of consideration, for a revaluation of the treatises in historical terms, as having different 'weightings' and relevance to the original readership. Shaftesbury, of course, tended to deprecate professional philosophy as 'metaphysical speculation' of little relevance to living.

Shaftesbury begins the Soliloquy with something of a familiar ploy. His subject is advice. He states that it is not his intention to give advice, but rather to consider the manner of advising. This echoes his consideration of the characteristics of zealots' writings rather than their content. Of course, his intention is to advise. He then proceeds, after his good-humoured fashion, to give mock consideration to whom he should advise, before determining that he will pretend to advise himself rather than arrogantly start advising others. Since it is the manner of giving advice that concerns him, he will consider the manner of advising the self. Support for this practice is to be found in poets and playwrights, especially among the ancients. In this way the idea of the individual communicating with himself is introduced. Superficially, the social dimension is for the present superseded by that of the individual, and Shaftesbury's charge can now be addressed to the particular individual rather than to a general audience that had hitherto formed his objective. This, however, though suggesting an individualist approach, is superficial, and means no more than Shaftesbury's claim not to give advice, for he quickly looks to the social implications of the individual's behaviour.

If the individual were to adopt the manner of soliloquy, or

conversation with the self, this might lead to an improvement in manners:

'We might peradventure be less noisy and more profitable in company if at convenient times we discharged some of our articulate sound and spoke to ourselves viva voce when alone. For company is an extreme provocation to fancy, and, ... is apt to make our imaginations sprout too fast.....' 1

On the other side, the manners of contemporary society were not well suited to the pursuit of this commendable soliloquising. Not only would it be essentric in a general way, but for some members of the community it might be positively harmful:

'I am sensible how fatal it might prove to many honourable persons should they acquire such a habit as this, or offer to practise such an art within reach of any mortal ear, For 'tis well known that we are not many of us like that Roman who wished for windows to his breast, that all might be as conspicuous there as in his house...' 2

Traditionally, he continues, the practice of soliloquy had been the province of the poet. Horace and others had demonstrated the benefit of retirement for this purpose. Shaftesbury concurs with this, but this should not be read as implying his idealisation of country life, or avoidance of the town. As we have seen the two linked, for Horace and Shaftesbury, especially in his Stoic inclination, and did not imply rejection of civic values. Epictetus would have argued, with Marcus Aurelius, that peace should lie in the breast of the individual, and not in external circumstances. Shaftesbury appears to allow some weakening here on the basis of

1. Characterisitics i, 106.

2. Ibid., i, 107. A 'dig' at the politicians was probably what was intended here.

existing social pressure.³ The associated gestures and actions, which characterise those talking to themselves, would unfortunately be regarded as the conduct of an irrational person in company.

Although poets and philosophers were known for their eccentricities of conduct after this fashion, this was not true in the case of other members of the writing profession. This, Shaftesbury thought, was their loss. In becoming better gentlemen, they became worse authors, their lives being lived in the town, their critical judgment formed by the circle of 'Bayes' or similar authority. Clearly for the purposes of creative thinking, Shaftesbury would move the author outside society.

Shaftesbury's account then changes, and becomes more descriptive. He identifies these other authors as essayists and memoir writers, inter alia, amongst the former of which he might have felt inclined to include himself.

Then he becomes prescriptive once again. There was, he thought a particular kind of writing that should not be brought before the public - that of 'meditations', occasional reflections, commonplace books. These might be seen as the equivalent of his own notebooks, in which he kept and was still keeping his personal reflections on philosophy. A practice had arisen whereby such supposed works, often devotional in character, were published for the edification of the reading public. Shaftesbury did not approve. If genuine, he regarded them as unfinished, unpolished, unrefined. They were brought into

3. c.f. Moralists where the structure and setting of the dialogue allows rural and soliloquising retreat, whilst maintaining the social and civil values by referring to a town setting, and a dinner group at a country house.

the world half-conceived, their authors' incapable of bringing anything complete into the world. Moreover, if they were brought out as being written with a view to publication, then they were not proper meditations, but artifidal and contrived pieces.

It is unlikely that Shaftesbury had suffered such a reaction from Marcus, as to vituperate after this fashion - always politely - on account of the Emperor's writings. Much more probable is the significant fact that many divines were wielding their pens in support of pious reflections and instructively moral histories. This form of writing had no attraction for Shaftesbury when it derived from contemporary gentlemen of the cloth. The whole practice he regarded as sham. He asked, whoever wrote meditations with footnotes and references to particular editions? His contempt and antagonism was epitomised in this way:

'A saint author of all men, least values politeness'. 4

The religious writer seemed ubiquitous in Augustan society. Shaftesbury's animosity, in the Letter may have been motivated by political considerations, because the Church party tended to be identified with the Tory part, certainly in Shaftesbury's eyes, and this was an ever-present element. It was also one that could be shared by others such as Somers. In Shaftesbury's case though, his opposition to the established Church seems to have run along a deeper and wider track. Early he had evidenced a suspicion of opposition to all religion in referring to Catholicism on the Continent as the 'horriddest of all religions'. This was in 1689.

4. Characteristics i, 110.

There was the occasional reference in his notebook to early religious experience, and it seems probable that for some time he adopted a Stoic concept of a deity rather than a Christian one. True, in the Characteristics he is at pains to dismiss any difference of opinion between himself and the Church 'by law established', but his insistence appears increasingly ironical as he undermines the social expressions of organised religion as superstition or enthusiasm. Yet Shaftesbury was not an irreligious man, far from it, it was simply that the role of the church in the state, in society politically and morally, in his view ought to have been diminished or severely curtailed. This set him against a forceful and fairly ruthless propaganda machine and he had to counter as best he could, using a variety of techniques. Some of these have been suggested already, and the attack upon writers here is but another of Shaftesbury's sallies against the citadel. What is increasingly interesting is Shaftesbury's willingness to compromise on freedom of opinion for some, whilst maintaining an attack whose logical conclusion seemed to suggest dismantling the Church-State relationship.

Shaftesbury then extends his proscription from the writers of such meditations and devotional works to the vocal blights of his society. The great talkers, the men who are foremost in conversation, those who are first in public assemblies, have little in terms of content to put forward, and, when they attempt to write, the inadequacies of the religious writers, beset them. They reveal evidence of not having thought their subject-matter through properly. At the same time as passing censure Shaftesbury is, of course, prescribing the limits of the acceptable in polite society. Clearly, the

devotional writer and overweening talkers would not be acceptable.

He then gives consideration to the lessons available from antiquity in relation to soliloquy. He seizes upon an idea which Epictetus, amongst others, had put forward, namely that of the individual being in possession of a 'genius' or guardian spirit, which shares the soul. We know that Shaftesbury himself had taken this idea very much to heart during his stay in Holland as it features importantly in his 'hymn' written for the return trip in 1704. Here, he applies the idea in an interesting way that might be properly called philosophical.

Shaftesbury does not argue that there is literally a duality of soul in man. This is metaphor to explain;

' "that we had each of us a patient in ourself; that we were properly our own subjects of practice; and that we then became due practitioners, when by virtue of an intimate recess we could discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide ourselves into two parties." '5

Shaftesbury's interpretation of what the ancients had put forward as their view of part of the human condition establishes a moral basis:

'According therefore as this recess was deep and intimate, and the dual number practically formed in us, we were supposed to advance in morals and true wisdom. This, they thought, was the only way of composing matters in our breast, and establishing that subordination which alone could make us agree with ourselves and be of a piece within. They esteemed this a more religious work than any prayers, or other duty in the temple....

This was, among the ancients, that celebrated Delphic inscription Recognise yourself; which was as much as to say, divide yourself, or be two. For if the division were rightly made, all within would of course, they thought,

5. Characteristics i, 112. Shaftesbury is paraphrasing the alleged belief among 'the ancients'.

be rightly understood and prudently managed. Such confidence had they in this home dialect of soliloquy.' 6

Even so, it might have remained of analogical value only if Shaftesbury had not himself come out in support of such a practical method of moral philosophising. The principle theme on the personal level was the need to secure consistency of desire and behaviour, and as such Shaftesbury's endorsement of self-examination can be seen to reflect the soul-searching that he had undergone during his visit to Holland. Sometimes this is implicit as a theme, at other times it becomes clearer, but it is evidently an important part of the Shaftesbury view qua philosopher. It will not be developed here because of the attention to view Shaftesbury as social writer, a man and critic of his times, but to those who would seek to understand the mind of the philosopher, it is a theme not to be underestimated. 7

Shaftesbury's own concern in the Soliloquy at this point, is to promote the method, ostensibly to authors, but in reality to any of his readers with sufficient perspicacity to penetrate this

6. Characteristics, i, 113.

7. The interest in Shaftesbury's philosophy could then be traced from his rejection of prevailing philosophical modes of discussion - such as the categorisation of ideas, of primary and secondary ideas as found in Locke, for example; from which rejection of a shared conceptual framework Shaftesbury was forced to construct another, or to find another approach (he chose this last course); next consideration would have to be given to the value of dual - or multi-personae notions, psychologically, philosophically and historically; (in which comparison with Plato's tripartite soul, or Freudian psychology might usefully be involved) and to the variance of this from contemporary ideas, and the logical implications might also be explored; thirdly, a conclusion might be drawn on the basis of the significance of introspection and self-examination as a manifestation of rejection in part of the "external world".

surface profession.

'One would think that there was nothing easier for us than to know our own minds, and to understand what our main scope was; what we plainly drove at, and what we proposed to ourselves, as our end, in every occurrence of our lives. But our thoughts have generally such an obscure implicit language, that 'tis the hardest thing in the world to make them speak out distinctly. For this reason the right method is to give them voice and accent.' 8

Shaftesbury is so far persuaded of the efficacy of self-inspection that he asserts that it is the chief interest of avarice, corruption and ambition and all other 'sly insinuating vices' to make sure that such self-criticism does not take place. He then gives examples of the sort of questions that might be addressed to the self after this fashion and these questions tend to turn on the social virtues and vices. In this manner Shaftesbury presents a case that is shown not to be abstract but of relevance to his reader. Again,

' 'Tis the grand artifice of villainy and lewdness, as well as of superstition and bigotry, to put us on terms of greater distance and formality with ourselves, and evade our proving method of soliloquy. And for this reason, how specious soever may be the instruction and doctrine of formalists, their very manner itself is a sufficient blind or remora in the way of honesty and good sense.' 9

Shaftesbury then turns to a consideration of imitation or verisimilar forms of soliloquising, forms which may be mistaken for the reality. He considers the lover and the anchorite, neither of whom are alone in the true sense since the objects of their affections, lover or deity, is present in imagined form. Here there is lacking the element of self-examination and self-criticism. These

8. Characteristics i, 113.

9. Ibid., i, 115. remora - obstruction, impediment.

two forms were akin to the false enthusiams found elsewhere in the Characteristics.

Shaftesbury attempts by a new method at this point to show, as opposed to ratiocinate, what it is that he is trying to communicate. He inserts a short narrative, designed to persuade the reader of the reality of 'two-souls-in-one-person', and the need to appoint an arbiter.¹⁰

Once more Shaftesbury states the benefits he believes will come from the practice:

'We hope, however, that by our method of practice and the help of the grand arcanum which we have professed to reveal, this regimen or discipline of the fancies may not in the end prove so severe or motifying as is imagined. We hope also that our patient (for such we naturally suppose our reader) will consider duly with himself that what he endures in this operation is for no inconsiderable end, since 'tis to gain him a Will, and ensure him a certain resolution, by which he shall know where to find himself; be sure of his own meaning and design; and as to all his desires, opinions, and inclinations, be warranted one and the same person to-day as yesterday, and to-morrow as to-day.' 11

He then turns to a consideration of the education in this philosophical practice. It is recommended for all men but particularly for authors, that is, for poets, historians, political men,

He distinguishes between those who are taught by nature alone, and those instructed by nature accompanied by art. He concludes that it is 'undeniable' that grace and perfection are best expressed in the person of a 'liberal education'. The social graces of movement

10. Characteristics 1, 116-120

11. Ibid., 1, 123 Arcanum - mystery, secret

can be taught and are most effective when added to a naturally gracious disposition. The instruction is most thorough-going when it is imparted to those of tender years, by the best masters.

Shaftesbury argues that the case is analogous for those who would be authors, (in the wide sense that Shaftesbury uses);

'Now such as these masters and their lessons are to a fine gentleman, such are philosophers and philosophy to an author. The case is the same in the fashionable and in the literate world. In the former of these it is remarked that by the help of good company, and the force of example merely, a decent carriage is acquired, with such apt motions and such freedom of limbs as on all ordinary occasions may enable the party to demean himself like a gentleman. But when, upon further occasion, trial is made in an extraordinary way - when exercises of the genteeler kind are to be performed in public - 'twill easily appear who of the pretenders have been formed by rudiments, and had masters in private, and who, on the other side, have contented themselves with bare imitation, and learnt their part casually and by rote. The parallel is easily made on the side of writers. They have at least as much need of learning the several motions, counterpoises and balances of the mind and passions, as the other students, those of the body and limbs -' 12

He then concentrates upon authors, and in particular upon their need to come into the 'commonwealth of Letters' properly trained. Natural skill or genius is not enough. Knowledge is requisite, and knowledge such as can be gained only from philosophy. Philosophy illustrates and exhibits the rules of art. Knowledge gained from 'common authors' or the 'general conversation of the world' is not what Shaftesbury means and is specifically excluded. This, of course, would follow from Shaftesbury's animadversions upon the low state of wit and raillery found in the Essay and from his wish to improve the cultural climate of the times.

The basic source from which Shaftesbury launches his critical literary opinion is the Ars Poetica of Horace, but this is backed by other classical references. Undoubtedly, this part of the Soliloquy is important as a contribution to the literary theory and aesthetic of the time. R.L.Brett in his work on Shaftesbury has established the importance of Shaftesbury's aesthetic and literary theory, particularly in the context of contemporary views.¹³ There might appear to be some conflict therefore between this account, which emphasises the moral and philosophical aspect of this treatise, and an account like Brett's which sees the 'literary' aspect first. Yet this is not really so, Shaftesbury's views were shifting, as has been suggested; the literary opinions expressed here are not especially unique; and Shaftesbury's full moral aesthetic was developed later in Italy. The identification of moral beauty and truth at the end of the Essay has been remarked, but the progressive approach to the Characteristics used here does not suggest that literary and aesthetic concern lay central to Shaftesbury's endeavours in this treatise. There is the suggestion that, in changing his audience, albeit only as 'design', he reflected his changing opinions, but basically the distinction between Brett's approach and that adopted here means that the perspective on the Characteristics differs considerably. Brett does, however, give an illuminating account of the state of English literary opinion, and of French critical opinion also, in his book which affords increased appreciation of this part of Shaftesbury's work. Otherwise there is

13. R.L.Brett, op., cit.

some danger of thinking that Shaftesbury has taken a prolonged digression as a means of expressing the considered opinion of one who had transformed himself from public man to authority on literature in the space of a few years.

The significance, for our purpose, of Shaftesbury's excursion into literary authorities, lies not so much in what he said about them or the estimate he placed upon them, but in the fact that by referring to them at all he implies a common intellectual heritage which he could share with his contemporaries. The importance of the classical sources, with their mixture of philosophy and literature, thereby becomes apparent. The discussion of literature is a medium for the transmission of views on morals and character, and not an end in itself.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Shaftesbury turns to Horace and Homer and interprets their continued success upon the treatment of character, referring to the pre-Classical or pre-Socratic tradition of the mimes as mentioned by the first, and to the skill with which character is illustrated whilst the author, Homer, keeps in the background, in the second case.

Shaftesbury then offers a consideration of the significance of the dialogue form, especially as it reflects the soliloquising tendency of which he speaks. He writes of the unpopularity of the dialogue form amongst the moderns, his contemporaries, and contrasts this with its prevalence among the ancients.

He has previously argued that the merit of Homer or Horace derives in part from the effectiveness of poetry in its ability to show facets or aspects of the human character. In philosophical

dialogue, the characters must also show aspects of human nature. Shaftesbury is against 'wooden' mouthpieces, expressing the author's views without regard to the imitation of human nature. Homer, says Shaftesbury, demonstrates his skill in his ability to handle character.

The philosophical dialogue, a once-popular form has become feeble. He thinks he can explain this:

'I have formerly wondered indeed why a manner, which was familiarly used in treatises upon most subjects with so much success among the ancients, should be so insipid and of little esteem with us moderns. But I afterwards perceived that, besides the difficulty of the manner itself, and that mirror faculty which we have observed it to carry in respect of ourselves, it also proves of necessity a kind of mirror or looking glass to the age.' 14

He then displays his wit in ironically observing what might be involved if an attempt to construct a dialogue on the basis of accurate imitation of his contemporaries, were to be undertaken. The characters, he says would be so busy complimenting each other, that even if the author could be brought to make a fair representation, the reader would not be impressed.

In fact, Shaftesbury had to strike a balance between a display of learning in this area, citing classical sources to support his views, and at the same time to maintain the informal casual approach which would retain his readers' attentions. These readers might not be so readily familiar with the classical sources, and at this point Shaftesbury seeks to make due allowance for the facts.

14. Ibid., i, 130-1. My italics: their significance is to point to the descriptive background of the Moralists, a dialogue, with which treatise the next chapter is concerned

He then develops critical views which he had hitherto tended to confine to religious writers, about the standards of his contemporaries in the world of letters.

'I must confess there is hardly anywhere to be found a more insipid race of mortals than those whom we moderns are contented to call poets, for having attained the chiming fashion of a language, with an injudicious random use of wit and fancy.' 15

These men are contrasted with the archetypal true poet whom Shaftesbury rhapsodises:

'But for the man who truly and in a just sense deserves the name of poet, and who as a real master, or architect in the kind, can describe both men and manners, and give to an action its just body and proportions, he will be found, if I mistake not, a very different creature. Such a poet is indeed a second Maker; a just Prometheus under Jove. Like that sovereign artist or universal plastic nature, he forms a whole, coherent and proportioned in itself, with due subjection and subordinacy of constituent parts. He notes the boundaries of the passions, and knows their exact tones and measures; by which he justly represents them, marks the sublime of sentiments and action, and distinguishes the beautiful from the deformed, the aimable from the odious. The moral artist who can thus imitate the Creator, and is thus knowing in the inward form and structure of his fellow creature, will hardly, I presume, be found unknowing in himself, or at a loss in those numbers which make the harmony of a mind.' 16

The success of poets, as of any other authors, must lie with the influence upon them, and the encouragements afforded them, from among their contemporaries. By means of such a reflection, Shaftesbury frees himself to animadvert upon the prevailing tastes and fashions of the age. This, in fact, reverts back to the critical purpose of the earlier treatise, and the positive and constructive

15. Characteristics i, 135.

16. Ibid., i, 135-6. The reference to universal plastic nature reflects Cudworth's Intellectual System and perhaps Stoic physics/cosmology.

method is for a time eclipsed.¹⁷ Shaftesbury may be seen to be preparing the way for a revival of letters by his attacks.

The foremost arbiter of taste appears to be the Court. The taste of a Court is related to the constitutional principles then prevailing, absolutist or constitutional. Mindful of his readers, Shaftesbury is content to slip in an item on the British constitution:

'Foreign princes indeed have most of them that unhappy prerogative of acting unadvisedly and wilfully in their national affairs. But 'tis known to be far otherwise with the legal and just princes of our Island. They are surrounded with the best counsellors, the laws. They administer civil affairs by legal officers who have the direction of their public will and conscience; and they annually receive advice and aid in the most effectual manner from their good people. To this wise genius of our Constitution we may be justly said to owe our wisest and best princes, whose high birth or royal education could not alone be supposed to have given them that happy turn, since by experience we find that those very princes, from whose conduct the world abroad as well as we at home have reaped the greatest of advantages, were such as had the most controverted titles, and in their youth has stood in the remoter prospects of regal power, and lived the nearest to a private life.'¹⁸

In fact, this is a rather subtle passage, hinting at the limited constitution as viewed from the Whig side; suggesting a 'genius' for the state as well as for the individual as found elsewhere in the Soliloquy; endorsing the status quo, but through the medium of constitutional arrangements; hinting respectfully at the memory of the

17. In fact, this happens continuously as Shaftesbury's method is peculiarly congenial to the positive suggestion, to epigrammatic comment, the occasionally sententious phrase, and these can be both constructive and critical. It is on the basis of the shift of balance that the treatises can be said to move from the critical and social to the constructive and less recognisably immediate.
18. Characteristics pp 138-9. Although Shaftesbury could have pointed to Henry VII, and Elizabeth I, as such princes, it seems probable that William III was meant.

unpopular William, and perhaps even acting as a pointer to the author's views on the succession from Hanover. The Whigs were in power, but when the Tories came to power and Harley's machinations and alleged 'closet' politics were before the public mind, the passage would perhaps be read, by those who 'knew', as ironical in intention.

The Court, then, influences through the views of the monarch. After some examples from earlier Kings, Shaftesbury thinks that it will not be necessary for them to take up their pens again. The ministers of the monarch might usefully act as patrons.

On the question of patronage, the cultural support and encouragement afforded to artists, Shaftesbury was on uncertain ground. He believes that there is to be a resurgence of cultural activity, and this becomes most clear in the Letter Concerning Design. Yet this will have to be encouraged and so far, to Shaftesbury's mind, the patronage of the Court had not been markedly successful. It was difficult to conceive of the patronage or tutelage of the nobility, some of them courtiers, and many surrounded by social and moral corruption, being in any respect better. On the other hand it was necessary, and Shaftesbury tried to put forward ideas that would leave the artist free from servile obligation and at the same time secure his welfare. In the Characteristics this tends to emerge rather than to be stated, and it is a matter that Shaftesbury perhaps, did not resolve satisfactorily.

In his personal capacity we may note that he tended to treat the artist, especially in his commissioned 'Judgment of Hercules' painted in Italy, as the craftsman who expressed the author's con-

ception, the author being Shaftesbury. As such, the artist was little more than artisan, or journeyman painter. This was not always the case. Shaftesbury's payment of a pension to Toland even after the matter of the unauthorised Inquiry suggests that when he thought merit or talent occasioned it, Shaftesbury was prepared to be fairly open, and not to mind how his supplies were managed.

Shaftesbury perceived that the danger, or rather one danger of several, that lay with patronage by nobility, was that recognition would not be afforded when it was needed, support not provided until it was no longer required. The situation of Samuel Johnson was anticipated. On the other hand, Shaftesbury argued that the British Muses were, as yet, in their infancy and needed appropriate care. In this opinion he was joined by other contemporary critics. He viewed Shakespeare, Fletcher, Jonson and Milton, as atypical. They were the first of the moderns to cast off the 'horrid discord of jingling rhyme'.¹⁹

He contrasts the artistic achievements of France, an 'airy neighbouring nation'. France was, of course, predominant culturally although its ascendancy was to be increasingly challenged, but Shaftesbury's remarks - and he was anti-French - are peculiarly coloured by the political and social conditioning that he thinks affects literary forms. The French are at their best in tragedy.

19. P.A.W. Collins, 'Literary Theory and Literary Criticism' in The Pelican Guide to English Literature 4: from Dryden to Johnson ed Boris Ford, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968) 173-187

Tragedy is expected to show calamity can affect those high on the social scale, and in consequence deter the lower orders from aspiring too high, and to encourage their acceptance of the status quo by a suggestion of some kind of natural justice. In other respects Shaftesbury's judgment of things French was still antagonistic, though since the days of the Grand Tour it had acquired the veneer of politeness. Shaftesbury touches upon the great theme of Letters in the eighteenth century, the relation of 'liberty' and cultural achievement. Of course, Shaftesbury is ~~hardly~~^{likely} likely to have done such a thing unconsciously, and we may assume that he is pointing, or signalling to the perspicacious, what he is unwilling to spell out in detail.²⁰

Shaftesbury considers the place of the artist in society. At this time the idea of the artist as one who was alienated from the ordinary diurnal roll by his different perceptions of the world, had not really appeared. Shaftesbury's soliloquising does not appear to imply this sort of stance should be adopted vis a vis society. His problem was getting the man of letters out of the town, out of the coffee house. Even rude and barbarous nations says Shaftesbury, will have their 'poets, rhapsoders, historiographers, antiquaries of some kind or other' to record extraordinary civil and military achievements. These men were in second place in a natural hierarchy. The first place went to statesmen, or armed worthies.

There was a traditional model in which heroes were in the first

20. There is, incidentally, a one page account of the decline of the Roman Empire after Augustus, Characteristics i, 144.

category, and counsellors in the second. Under Shaftesbury this was interpreted so that Somers as well as a Marlborough could be placed among the foremost men, and Shaftesbury and the men of Letters, could assume an honourable secondary role. On the one hand, this merely reflects the personal position of one who had been deprived by circumstances of what may have been conceived as his natural position among the politicians; but on the other it may also be seen as an attempt to give Shaftesbury's authors, a distinct place in a fairly hierarchical society, and to free some at least from the position of hired wits. Shaftesbury suggests that it might be better to have an improved cultural group than to risk the elevation given to royalty - to be depicted upon the sign of the inn.

Shaftesbury groups these reflections around the theme of patronage in society, and society is never far in Shaftesbury's mind, from the politics of the day. Also Shaftesbury is capable of more than a little optimism, thinking that an ingenious man never starves, and that the man of letters can revenge himself with his pen. Richard Savage and John Tutchin met unenviable ends in this period. In fairness Shaftesbury's complacency is used to promote patronage, to suggest its adoption if for no better reason than that of self-interest.

'All things considered as to the interest of our potentates and grandees, they appear to have only this choice left to them: either wholly, if possible, to suppress Letters, or give a helping hand towards their support. Wherever the author-practice and liberty of the pen has in the least prevailed, the Governors of the State must be either considerable gainers or sufferers by its means. So that 'twould become them either by a right Turkish policy to strike directly at the profession,

and overthrow the very art and mystery itself, or with alacrity to support and encourage it in the right manner, by a generous and impartial regard to merit.' 21

In respect of the political aspects of patronage, Shaftesbury argues that where the people are involved in the government then they look to the great men of society to act the part of patrons:

'In a government where the people are sharers in power, but no distributors or dispensers of rewards, they expect it of their princes and great men that they should supply the generous part, and bestow honour and advantages on those from whom the nation itself may receive honour and advantage. 'Tis expected that they who are high and eminent in the State should not only provide for its necessary safety and subsistence, but omit nothing which may contribute to its dignity and honour. The Arts and Sciences must not be left patronless. The public itself will join with the good wits and judges in the resentment of such a neglect.' 22

The random distribution of largesse is insufficient and ineffective as a form of patronage. Merit, says Shaftesbury, is easily found when sought for. Indiscriminate rewards offend the talented, and encourage the incompetent. 'The public' never fails to provide an indication of where talent lies, which encouraged will prove considerable.

On this optimistic note he concludes this part of his review of external influences upon men of letters, authors. How does this then fit in with the overall design of the treatise, and with the socialisation of philosophy?

In the case of the first, it is necessary to repeat that Shaftesbury is perhaps less certain of his readership than might be thought to be the case. What was originally conceived as a

21. Characteristics i, 148.

22. Ibid.

vehicle through which to offer moral advice to all readers has for the time taken on a strength of character. The authors and their cause become important per se. In part this reflects Shaftesbury's growing interest in literary and critical activities as a means of fulfilling a role in society.

In the second case, it appears evident that if, as is being suggested Shaftesbury has been engaged upon a critical undermining of existing standards, expectations and mores of the society in which he lives, then he will have to attempt to suggest new norms, new standards. The socialisation of philosophy, conceived in a broad sense as the introduction of a different kind of discourse into a society itself requiring certain guides and norms, presupposes for its effectiveness a society which can furnish the necessary setting for these norms, and for the practice of this kind of exchange. So that against this background, Shaftesbury's discourse about patronage as it has been and as it ought to be, in his sort of society, is not a digression reflecting personal idiosyncracies, but can be seen as a necessary step in the depiction, by criticism and constructive suggestion, of the type of society which Shaftesbury envisages will permit the socialisation of philosophy.

The next stage in his assessment of the external environment, the society in which the author attempts to communicate and achieve recognition, is Shaftesbury's consideration of the critics. Shaftesbury's assessment here may have been conditioned by the reception received by the Letter, which we have seen to have been unfavourable and not particularly elevated.

There was too at this time a re-appraisal being pursued among critics as to the nature of their profession. In such a review, were found debates on the rival merits of the ancients and the moderns, the proper place of 'rules' and the lesser place of natural talent. On the other hand, although there was much conflict between writers and critics, heightened by the political divisions of the time which tended to ensure a partisan reception, matters do not seem to have reached the heights attained by a later generation in the age of Pope. To a greater degree than was common at the time, Shaftesbury would have been economically independent of a critical reception which if unfavourable, could 'break' less affluent authors. In this sense the idea of critics holding the whip-hand over the progress of the author does not apply to Shaftesbury, and applies generally speaking, to a lesser degree at this time than later, when certain of the literary mechanisms of the Augustan age had developed further. Of course, such statements are really little more than guidelines, a context against which to set Shaftesbury's discussion, and they should not therefore be read as dogmatic.

Perhaps because of his relative economic independence, Shaftesbury was able to take a more detached view of the role of the critic and the way in which his contemporaries saw it being acted. Writers feared the critics, thought Shaftesbury, and anticipated the criticism of the critic before their work. Here he seems to have had in mind, the appearance of long explanatory prefaces such as were written by Dryden, and set before his plays. This suggests a weakness among the writers as much as strength among the critics.

The feeble writers, thought the third Earl, would do better to stand up to the critics and allowing themselves appreciation only of what was vulgar, should challenge their critics to aspire to something more refined, which only men of true learning could appreciate.

Secondly, Shaftesbury considers the role of originality and that of 'the pains they had taken to be correct' (decorum) in modern literary society and in days of 'Attic elegance'. This was Shaftesbury's contribution to the debate concerning the precedence of natural talent or accepted critical principles, 'the rules'. Shaftesbury inclines to favour the latter, as evidencing more true skill.

Now the grounds on which these judgements are taken are in both cases, elitist. Shaftesbury argues simply that there is a distinction between the vulgar and the comoscenti, and backs his decisions in terms of this distinction. Since this is implicit, it will be best shown. Advising the rejoinder to the critics rather than the weak anticipation, he says:

'... "As for you vulgar souls, mere naturals who know no art, were never admitted into the temple of wisdom, nor ever visited the sanctuaries of wit or learning, gather yourselves together from all parts, and hearken to the song or tale I am about to utter. But for your men of science and understanding, who have ears and judgment, and can wigh sense, scan syllables, and measure souds; you who by a certain art distinguish false thought from true, correctness from rudeness, and bombast and chaos from order and the sublime: away hence! or stand aloof! whilst I practise upon the easiness of those mean capacities and apprehensions, who make the most numerous audience, and are the only competent judges of my labours."....'23

And writing of the skill with which the ancients concealed their art,

'Such accuracy of workmanship requires a critic's eye.
'Tis lost upon a vulgar judgment. Nothing grieves a
real artist more than that indifference of the public
which suffers work to pass uncriticised.' 24

The prevalent sense among authors of their being 'critic-haters' is, to Shaftesbury, evidence of the inadequacy of the authors themselves. He need not have taken this line, he could have endorsed attacks on the critics, or have said that until some fundamental reciprocity was established between authors and critics, such animosities would continue, and that the establishment, of such reciprocity required the revaluation of authors' several intentions in a contemporary setting. But Shaftesbury elected for a time to join with the critics, and to support them, or the informal social institution that they went to make up.

'...I take it upon me absolutely to condemn the fashionable and prevailing custom of inveighing against critics as the common enemies, the pests and incendiaries of the Commonwealth of Wit and Letters. I assert, on the contrary, that they are the props and pillars of this building; and that without the encouragement and propagation of such a race, we should remain as Gothic architects as ever.' 25

Shaftesbury gives us a condensed and conjectured history of the social development of the arts. It is interesting that his account is a political interpretation, which might be said to justify the acquisition of skills in art by political leaders or by those who aspired to be such.

'...the goddess PERSUASION must have been in a manner the mother of poetry, rhetoric, music and the other kindred arts. For 'tis apparent that where chief men and leaders had the strongest interest to persuade, they

24. Ibid., i, 152.

25. Ibid., i, 153.

used the highest endeavours to please.

.....

If therefore it so happened in these free communities made by consent and voluntary association, that after awhile the power of one or a few grew prevalent over the rest; if force took place, and the affairs of the society were administered without their concurrence by the influence of awe and terror; it followed that these pathetic sciences and arts of speech were little cultivated since they were of little use. But where persuasion was the chief means of guiding the society; where the people were to be convinced before they acted; there elocution became considerable, there orators and bards were heard, and the chief geniuses and sages of the nation betook themselves to the study of those arts by which the people were rendered more tractable in a way of reason and understanding, and more subject to be led by men of science and erudition. The more these artists courted the public, the more they instructed it. In such constitutions as these 'twas the interest of the wise and able that the community should be judges of ability and wisdom...

Hence it is that those arts have been delivered to us in such perfection by free nations, who from the nature of their government, as from a proper soil, produced the generous plants; whilst the mightiest bodies and vastest empires, governed by force and a despotic power, could, in after ages of peace and leisure, produce no other than what was deformed and barbarous of the kind.' 26

The critic came from amongst those who, not wishing or not able to participate in such arts at the highest level, satisfied themselves with the contemplation of the practice of such arts.

Clearly for Shaftesbury the development of the arts - music, poetry, rhetoric, is related to a general form of political order inclining perhaps to aristocracy, but avoiding oligarchy. It may appear that there is a contradiction between his rejection of the judgment of the vulgar a little earlier and the acceptance of a requirement to appeal to the community. This can be diminished by referring to the vulgar as common people and the community as the

enfranchised, the political part of the nation. Theoretically, it would have presented a problem for Shaftesbury had he been primarily a political theorist. Ideologically, his reference to the early societies having been made by 'consent and voluntary association' as indicative of Shaftesbury's inclining to a Whig view of the origin of society and would have acted as a signal to those of his contemporaries who were keen to note such signs. Such views, here left in an undeveloped form, may best be regarded as signals rather than as parts of a greater philosophy which Shaftesbury himself set down. Similarly, they are not especially original and the Shaftesburean intimation of which side he was aligning with, may be seen here as part of the accommodation process, the settling in, of dialectical position more fully developed by others, such as Locke.

After the social history of the arts, Shaftesbury proceeds to the history of criticism. The original figures here are said to have been the Sophists, although even great philosophers subsequently did not feel that criticism of a similar kind was below them. This is evidenced more certainly by Shaftesbury's use of Aristotle's Poetica.²⁷ The Sophists are seen to have played a social role, albeit a secondary one, of advising on what ways and manners might be used by leaders of society in the pursuit of their ends through the medium of the arts. This led to refinement in the several arts.

Shaftesbury then changes the approach and gives a short account

27. Aristotle, 'On the Art of Poetry' in Classical Literary Criticism translated and with an Introduction by T.S.Dorsch (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974).

of the history of some arts, exploring the logic of their development. Of the several ways of writing, the pompous and miraculous 'or what we generally call the sublime' was first to appear. This was because mankind was untaught and childlike in its understanding, preferring the wonderful to the mundane and reasonable. In music and statuary:

'The best music of barbarians is hideous and astonishing sounds. And the fine sights of Indians are enormous figures, various odd and glaring colours, and whatever of that sort is amazingly beheld with a kind of horror and consternation.' 28

In poetry and studied prose the turning point away from the exaggerated is said to have appeared with the writing of Homer, who restricted the use of figurative and metaphorical modes, and concentrated instead upon the unity of design, accurate representation of character and the just imitation of nature. The Homeric paradigm was then worked out through several directions, of which Shaftesbury particularly attends to Comedy.

Comedy, he writes, came after Tragedy according to Aristotle, the 'prince of critics'. Early Comedy, Shaftesbury describes as a kind of debunking, a hearty satire against the serious claims of pompous orators and tragedians. Again this is given a social background, and Shaftesbury suggests that the form of comedy followed from 'necessity and from the reason and nature of things'.

However the Greeks found it necessary to restrain the unbridled Comedy, and Shaftesbury is then on the defensive when he has to justify this action. Clearly, having argued for some limited

toleration and a less active magistrate, his circumstances require Shaftesbury to do something of this kind. He argues that it was not from external pressure that the Greeks undertook to limit Comedy in the Athenian state, but from the natural inclination of the people to aspire to a higher form of the art. The law followed the public taste:

'Nothing therefore could have been the cause of these public decrees, and of this gradual reform in the commonwealth of wit, beside the real reform of taste and humour in the commonwealth or government itself. Instead of any abridgment, 'twas in reality an increase of liberty, an enlargement of the security of property, and an advancement of private ease and personal safety, to provide against what was injurious to the good name and reputation of every citizen. As this intelligence in life and manners grew greater in that experienced people, so the relish of wit and humour would naturally in proportion be more refined. Thus Greece in general grew more and more polite, and as it advanced in this respect was more averse to the obscene buffooning manner.' 29

In support of his claim that this refinement was a natural development Shaftesbury cites the example of Rome which introduced similar legislation, and in which it could not be argued that such legislation was the effect of internal tyranny or external threat.

However, it need scarcely be pointed out that the defence of property, the reference to a commonwealth, were once again indicators to the susceptible, of a view which had applicability outside the world of Greece and Rome, namely that of the 18th century Englishman.

Shaftesbury then subjects Philosophy to a shorter parallel account. The tradition passes through Socrates, Plato, to Xenophon. Socrates is said to have been censorious, rather satiric, (his being of mean birth and poorest circumstances seem relevant to Shaftesbury)

whereas Plato inclined more to the sublime, to poetry and rhetoric, (he is of noble birth). Plato was more good humoured, 'more agreeable'. As for Xenophon:

'...another noble disciple, whose genius was towards action, and who proved afterwards the greatest hero of his time, took the genteeler part and softer manner. He joined what was deepest and most solid in philosophy with what was easiest and most refined in breeding, and in the character and manner of a gentleman. Nothing could be remoter than his genius was from the scholastic, the rhetorical, or mere poetic kind.... This was that natural and simple genius of antiquity, comprehended by so few and so little relished by the vulgar.' 30

Shaftesbury then locates Aristotle against this background, and lays emphasis upon the method of the philosopher rather than his thought in itself. Clearly Aristotle, though seen to be significant was not one of Shaftesbury's favoured philosophers. He pointed out that there were danger in trusting to uncertain foundations and then following Aristotle's methodic approach. He thought Aristotle more inclined to other sciences than those of ethics, dialectic or logic, upon which the attention of the Academy or Porch was concentrated.

The treatment at this level of condensed history of classical thought leads us naturally to ask what it was that Shaftesbury thought he was doing. On the one hand, he demonstrates his own familiarity, in such a way as would lead to his acceptance as an authority. Secondly, he treats the matter for the most part simply in such a way as would provide a context in which to approach the classics had they been rejected as indigestible at an earlier stages in the education

30. Ibid., i, 167. Shaftesbury identifies Xenophon in the footnotes, but clearly hoped that his readers would look to have their judgments confirmed, rather than to identify in this manner.

of his readers. Thirdly he intimates and suggests, through this area, that while he and his readers are familiar with the general picture that he is sketching, there remains implicit in his account something that those with sufficiently high a level of penetration, will be able to see. Critically, he may be doing too much, we might say, but it is of fundamental importance that the several layers of interpretation are remarked. The last two of those identified are probably the most important for they are in a sense incompatible. This is illustrated in Shaftesbury's trained identification of the philosophers whom he does not wish to mention by name in the text at this point.

Shaftesbury terminates this part of the discussion with his own view of the different styles of methodic, sublime, comic and simple. The latter is said to involve 'the strictest imitation of Nature'. However brief though his reference is, since the simple style appears to mark the acme of all literary styles, an account of Shaftesbury's views without it, would be inadequate:

'The simple manner, which being the strictest imitation of Nature should of right be the completest in the distribution of its parts and symmetry of its whole, is yet so far from making any ostentation of method, that it conceals the artifice as much as possible, endeavouring only to express the effect of art under the appearance of the greatest ease and negligence. And even when it assumes the censuring or reproving part, it does it in the most concealed and gentle way.' 31

To Shaftesbury, the simple manner is of little use. He believes that the age is incapable of receiving advice in such a way. The methodic and the sublime are also ruled out. The comic or satiric

31. Ibid., pp 168-9

remains.³² This is the method practised among his contemporaries, says Shaftesbury. He then closes his discussion of how authors are influenced by the critics, having argued that there is a necessary and desirable part for the critic, but having qualified this by a consideration of how this part may be played. Behind this, lies Shaftesbury's intention to provide a guide to the world of Letters and of Philosophy to those less familiar, by omission or neglect. There is to be prescription as well as critical description, but to a degree it remains undisclosed in this part of his treatise.

The third part of his review, consists in an appraisal of the public; the people or world in general, comprise the third element in his survey of the world of the man of letters from the outside. The public then, follow the patrons and the critics. Do the public suffer from the same lack of basic principles to guide them as do the patrons and critics?

For a philosopher characterised often enough by association with a best-of-all-worlds, Candide-like 'optimistic' philosophy, Shaftesbury has surprisingly little in the way of optimism about the state of the commonwealth of letters and its audience, and about the relationship between them at the time at which he was writing. Of course, it can be countered that the views set down by Shaftesbury here are not essentially his 'philosophy' and there is some truth in this. They are not especially his views, although they receive his expression: they are not his philosophy if the narrow construction is

32. This is satisfactory insofar as it goes, but clearly the Inquiry cannot be encompassed within the scope of the comic manner, and thus this passage of itself would not suffice to account for the overall style and unity of the Characteristics.

placed upon the term, in which case the Moralists represents Shaftesbury's view and the rest of the Characteristics becomes subordinate or irrelevant. It is perhaps better to try and see the wider purpose of Shaftesbury. This is our purpose, and here it takes the form of an observation of how easy it was for Shaftesbury to slip back into the critical phase of the Letter and the Essay, so easy in fact that one wonders if Shaftesbury did not consciously permit himself to indulge this critical spirit, even at the expense of his immediate concern. This sometimes appears to be the case in this second part of the treatise, this review of the external influences, upon the circumstances of authors and artists in general.

According to Shaftesbury, modern authors allege that they write as they do in order to please their audience, whose taste is already fixed. Shaftesbury argues that this is not the response that makes for virtuous behaviour. Virtuous behaviour requires that a man perform according to the best of his abilities and the standards of his art. By implication, modern writers have little of this kind of integrity. Shaftesbury argues that the Greeks formed their audience and did not claim that their audience formed them, which is how he sees the moderns behaving. In contrast to the Greeks, his reader will reach his own conclusion about the moderns:

'Our modern authors.....are turned and modelled (as themselves confess) by the public relish and current humour of the times. They regulate themselves by the irregular fancy of the world, and frankly own they are preposterous and absurd, in order to accommodate themselves to the genius of the age. In our days the audience makes the poet, and the bookseller the author, with what profit to the public, or what prospect of lasting fame and honour to the writer, let anyone who has judgment imagine.' 33

In a sense, this particular passage reflects the transfer of the philosophical concern between the unrestrained and undetermined life of Shaftesbury's archetypal contemporary. Shaftesbury, it will be remembered had a personal antagonism to the life of pleasure and unplanned change which he associated with indulgence of the senses. Shaftesbury is again sketching a background for those who would wish to understand the nature of contemporary literary and cultural life. Thirdly, his is touching upon but not really considering genuine problems that arose out of the changing economic relations in the cultural world - witness the introduction of the bookseller - although it cannot be said that he follows these problems through on either the economic plane of argument nor the moral plane. Fourthly, in phrasing his description of the modern world thus critically Shaftesbury is, as we have already hinted, prepared to slip back to a critical stance more usual in the Letter and the Essay.

The current state of the literary world would then be unsatisfactory, if what the writers claimed were true. Shaftesbury believes that much of their claim is, however, overstated. The absurdities of the authors are not designed to meet our taste, i.e. the taste of the audience. The latter he allows, is susceptible to expressions of literary nationalism but beyond the chauvinism, there is little disposition to approve authors. In fact, the taste of the audience, the theatre-goer, the reader, is determined by the standard of what is available. The relation is turned round. This affords the author with the opportunity to do as little as is required in order to accommodate his reader. Shaftesbury explores

this in the matter of panegyrics, wherein the practice of denigrating the ancient hero in order to set up the modern man is considered and adversely reflected upon.

Shaftesbury describes the method of Hercules, as he calls it:

'Were there an art of writing to be formed upon the modern practice, this method we have described /the modern panegyric above/ might perhaps be styled the Rule of Dispatch, or the Herculean Law, by which encomiasts, with no other weapon than their single club, may silence all other fame, and place their hero in the vacant throne of honour.' 34

He advises that the more learned and discerning critical reader will laugh rather than be suitably awed by such devastating comparisons. He extends the consideration of this aspect of contemporary literary life, associating with it the competitive practices of the age, local games and public festivals, the baitings and slaughter of so many creatures 'for diversion merely'. Here Shaftesbury may be seen to be suggesting the unsuitability not merely of a literary fashion to men of taste, but of a range of social practices found in contemporary society. The point is developed in the footnotes where Maecenas and Horace, are said to have improved the natural inclination of Augustus, and turned him away from his fondness for gladiatorial activities. Of course too much weight must not be placed upon an individual expression such as this, but the broad direction suggested definitely reveals an inclination to extend the discussion beyond the scope of philosophy, and beyond the range of literary fashion and practice.

Shaftesbury reflects upon the present stage of dramatic writing, and the fashionability of fights, and the like, in modern drama. It is not the immorality of the modern stage that he attacks, so much as its lack of merit, qua dramatic performance. His conclusion could perhaps have been shared by other writers of the Enlightenment:

'They who have no help from learning to observe the wider periods or revolutions of ~~human~~ kind, the alterations which happen in manners, and the flux and reflux of politeness, wit and art, are apt at every turn to make the present age their standard, and imagine nothing barbarous or savage but what is contrary to the manners of their time. The same pretended judges, had they flourished in our Britain at the time when Caesar made his first descent, would have condemned as a whimsical critic the man who should have made bold to censure our deficiency of clothing, and laugh at the blue cheeks and party-coloured skins which were then in fashion with our ancestors. So must of necessity be the judgment of those who are only critics by fashion. But to a just Naturalist or Humanist, who knows the creature Man and judges of his growth and improvement in society, it appears evidently that we British men were as barbarous and uncivilised in respect of the Romans under a Caesar as the Romans themselves were in respect of the Grecians when they invaded that nation under a Mummius.' 35

Shaftesbury is not of the opinion that the taste of the nation is barbarous. Rather, he thinks that audiences have given some indication of their ability to receive matter of a higher quality, and some few authors of their ability to produce it. In this last, Shakespeare and Milton receive qualified praise.³⁶

Shaftesbury concludes that it is not any inherent deficiency in the taste of the audience or reader that is to blame for the lack of a sufficiently high literary standard but that the authors must

35. Ibid.i,177.

36. Ibid.i,180. Shaftesbury's qualified praise must be viewed against the critical standards prevalent at his time, which tended to regard pre-Restoration literature, as rough-hewn, and unpolished.

look to themselves and stop making excuses. As a treatment of the external influence upon writers, Shaftesbury's consideration of the role of the audience is not without interest, for he makes some interesting points. On balance, it does not take the philosophical discussion much further, because he shows a tendency to avoid issues, and to be less analytic than is necessary for a sufficient treatment of the subject. His main burden is to point to the use of breadth of knowledge, of history and particularly of the ancients, as a necessary prerequisite to the formation of critical judgement. Yet by extending the matter across the broader spectrum of patronage, criticism and audience, Shaftesbury has shown the need for all men who would wish to talk and think intelligently about cultural matters, the world of arts and letters, to acquire some basic grounding which can act as a basis for considered critical appraisal.

It is fair to add that Shaftesbury then adds a few paragraphs to relate the preceding part of the treatise, the discussion of the external environment of authors, to the ethically based philosophy of self inspection that he dealt with initially in the first Part of the Soliloquy. It is not however, difficult to see that the second Part has not in itself primarily been a vehicle for the transmission of such a philosophy, but for cultural criticism. The two are combined in the following:

'We have acquitted the great men, their presumptive patrons, whom we have left to their own discretion. We have proved the critics not only an inoffensive but a highly useful race. And for the audience, we have found it not so bad as might perhaps at first be apprehended.

It remains that we pass sentence on our authors after having preculded them their last refuge, Nor do we condemn them on their want of wit or fancy, but of judgment and correctness, which can only be attain-

ed by thorough diligence, study, and impartial censure of themselves. 'Tis manners which is wanting. 'Tis a due entiment of morals which alone can make us knowing in order and proportion, and give us the just tone and measure of human passion.

So much the poet must necessarily borrow of the philosopher as to be master of the common topics of morality. He must at least be speciously honest, and in all appearance a friend to Virtue throughout his poem. The good and wise will abate him nothing in this kind; and the people, though corrupt, are in the main best satisfied with this conduct.' 37

Shaftesbury does not, as might be expected, return to a discussion of how the method of philosophising that he has outlined in his first part of the Soliloquy, might be implemented. His approach to the question is rather more circuitous. He advances by way of reflection upon philosophy and religion.

Firstly, he points out that everybody has or is supposed to have a notion of a better self. It is the ordinary, poorer self that on occasion, we are said to outdo. Appeals are made to our better selves. The problem says Shaftesbury is that we are not encouraged to take a good look at this better self, to set it off in distinction from our ordinary selves, and to use it as a model which we should attempt to emulate.

In religion, only the feeblest attempt is made to encourage such awareness and emulation:

'In our holy religion, which for the greatest part is adapted to the very meanest capacities, 'tis not to

37. Characteristics i, 181. The recognition of the corruption of the people, represents a movement away from the more liberal stance of earlier Shaftesbury; although this had always been a possibility the attribution of corruption might suggest less moral neutrality, which could be inferred from, say, a position of ignorance among the people.

'be expected that a speculation of this kind should be openly advanced.'Tis enough that we have hints given us of a hobler self than that which is commonly supposed the basis and foundation of our actions. Self-interest is there taken as it is vulgarly conceived.' 38

Shaftesbury continues his critique by pointing to the acceptance of an outdated cosmology, the commonly accepted view and that current at the time the Scriptures were composed, as a counterpart to an inadequate morality, according to 'vulgar prejudice' and the 'general conception of interest and self-good'. The religious appeal is made either to our pride or to our sense of wonder. This was a theme that Shaftesbury was to develop in his second Miscellany; the mistaken view of religion and the background to Christianity.

He seems to feel surer of his ground when he turns to the situation of philosophy:

'But whatever may be the proper effect or operation of religion, 'tis the known province of philosophy to teach us ourselves, keep us the self-same persons, and so regulate our governing fancies, passions, and humours, as to make us comprehensible to ourselves, and knowable by other features than those of a bare countenance.' 39

Shaftesbury briefly considers some problems and aspects of what would now be called the problem of personal identity by philosophers. The mutability of the individual being what it is, we require some standard or standards to which appeal may be made, when we have cause to suspect that a person is 'not himself', or when somebody wishes to claim that he is a person whom we can recognise in him no

38. Characteristics i, 183.

39. Ibid., i, 184.

longer.⁴⁰ He reaffirms that which we call philosophy is the means by which we are enabled to progress further along the road of self-recognition, to increase the intelligence or comprehension that we have of ourselves, and to be more dependable in friendship, 'society and the commerce of life'.⁴¹

Alas, this conception of philosophy does not match with current practice. It is to the latter that Shaftesbury now attends, as he resumes his magisterial criticism of society:

'Now if in the literate world there be any choking weed, anything purely thorn or thistle, 'tis in all likelihood that very kind of plant which stands for philosophy in some famous schools. There can be nothing more ridiculous than to expect that manners or understanding should sprout from such a stock. It pretends indeed some relation to manners as being definitive of the natures, essences, and properties of spirits, and some relation to reason as describing the shapes and forms of certain instruments employed in the reasoning art. But had the craftiest of men, for many ages together, been employed in finding out a method to confound reason and degrade the understanding of mankind, they could not, perhaps, have succeeded better than by the establishment of such a mock science.'⁴²

Here is no pleading on behalf of the freedom of wit for a few friends in private. Shaftesbury turns out in full censoring dress to condemn some famous schools. It is unlikely that he meant any other than the English Universities of the time. The heads of the Oxford Colleges had at one time considered the suppression of Locke's

40. The personal identity problem is, of course still an open question among philosophers, and as such no attempt will be made here to evaluate Shaftesbury's contribution. The concern is rather to see how he used the existence of the problem, which at this time had not reached some of its more extreme positions (for which see Hume's Treatise of Human Nature Book I Section VI, 'Of personal identity'), in order to set up the argument he himself wished to put forward. In Miscellany IV (Characteristics ii, 274-5), Shaftesbury performs a similar manoeuvre.

41. Characteristics i, 186.

42. Ibid. In passing, it may be of interest the use of metaphor of commerce and horticulture in these passages, reflecting the usage of the time and Shaftesbury's perspective.

Essay, and would not have been known to Shaftesbury for their enlightened views. It has been mentioned that the third Earl thought of the universities as breeding grounds for the Church and High Toryism. His own acquaintance with schools was not great, and he may have had no personal experience of university life at all, although Maurice may have rendered an account of Leyden in the 1690s. Although the personal element cannot ever be completely ruled out, it seems probable that it was the influence of the famous schools upon moral and political attitudes, the ideological dimension, with which Shaftesbury was most concerned.

Shaftesbury's complaint by implication was the philosophy was not what people supposed it to be. He allowed the existence of what was practised as natural philosophy, such studies as mathematics, geometry, grammar, but they were not philosophy. They were not likely to ~~help~~ improve the man or the manners.

'The solidity of mathematics, and its advantage to mankind is proved by many effects in those beneficial arts and sciences which depend on it, though astologers, horoscopers, and other such are pleased to honour themselves with the title of mathematicians. As for metaphysics, and that which in the schools is taught for logic or for ethics, I shall willingly allow it to pass for philosophy when by any real effects it is proved capable to refine our spirits, improve our understandings, or mend our manners. But if the defining material and immaterial substances, and distinguishing their properties and modes, is recommended to us as the right manner of proceeding in the discovery of our own natures, I shall be apt to suspect such a study as the more delusive and infatuating on account of its magnificent pretension.' 43

~~However~~, even the student of geometry is not allowed to escape entirely unscathed. Shaftesbury adds that while he does not think

the student expects to improve his knowledge of himself, the same student will be rightly grateful to escape without a cracked head. Shaftesbury, found the sciences of little interest beyond being logical puzzles, and was by no means overawed by the improvements in physics that were taking place at this time. They were simply amusing or diverting, sometimes good, sometimes bad, irrelevancies to his purpose. This purpose was to put philosophy back firmly on its ethical and social base, to destroy the prevalent conception described above and to introduce a new model, a new paradigm, with a necessary process of socialisation.

The mathematician may exercise his descretion and good sense. The philosopher, who aims at something different will if he mistake his aim and approach, turn out ignorance or 'idiotism'. Shaftesbury says therefore that the most ingenious way of becoming foolish is by a system. Of course this was turned against him when he put forward his own positive views. But in the context in which he is writing, it is fairly clear that what Shaftesbury has in mind is a metaphysical structure of definitions and logical relations, a programme of ratiocination, which present some form of logical argument. Perhaps Spinoza served as well known example among the moderns, but Shaftesbury probably meant scholasticism as then taught at the universities.

In one sense Shaftesbury merely dislikes the method of presentation. It marks the reflection that he had passed about Aristotle and the methodic manner, which though attractive to some minds led easily to absurdity and error. Shaftesbury's most scholastic or formal piece the Inquiry never developed to the methodic manner of

proposition, definition, deduction and syllogism. Rather the arguments of the Inquiry could so easily have been dismantled by a professional logician after this formal fashion, that Shaftesbury must remain suspected of having parodied the style a little in his claim to be formal.

On another level, behind the difference in opinion about the form there lay such a fundamental difference as to the content and purpose of philosophy, that to attend to form was merely to scratch the surface. Shaftesbury continues, perhaps ingenuously, to charge the traditionalists with the aspirations that he attributed to his philosophy and to blame them for not coming up with better answers than they have done. However, it allows him to send home another shaft against the manners of the philosophers:

'One would expect it of these physiologists and searchers of modes and substances that being so exalted in their understandings and enriched with science above other men, they should be as much above them in their passions and sentiments. The consciousness of being admitted into the secret recesses of nature and the inward resources of a human heart should, one would think, create in these gentlemen a sort of magnanimity which might distinguish them from the ordinary race of mortals. But if their pretended knowledge of the machine of this world, and of their own frame, is able to produce nothing beneficial either to the one or to the other. I know not to what purpose such a philosophy can serve, except only to shut the door against better knowledge, and introduce impertinence and conceit with the best countenance of authority.' 44

Shaftesbury then turns to a consideration of why it is that a man who has studied human nature after the manner of Natural Philosophy, who has formally studied and ~~tr~~^eated of the passion, should think himself wiser than his fellows, more knowing than the rest of mankind

despite the fact that the evidence points to his being more prone to error, more fearsome and more inclined to delusion than ordinary man, Who is in Shaftesbury's mind at this point? It is probable that Hobbes was 'less free from superstitions and vain fears', but really the question is not designed to suggest one man but a type of man, recognisable to the reader. For that reason I should be doubtful over any specific attribution.

He considers Descartes' argument in his Treatise of the Passions as an expression of the physiological view point. Shaftesbury's main counter is that there is insufficient distinction between causation explained in terms of what is originating and what is contingent. For example, cowardice may be caused by fear, and fear accompanied by knocking knees, but the latter is contingent rather than originating, and does not help to answer the question of what causes fear in the first place, what originates the fear. This is a similar position to that taken by Cudworth to counter mechanistic interpretations of the universe, in the True Intellectual System of the Universe.⁴⁵

Shaftesbury also argues that physiological explanation will not help the individual to improve his position. For that, he must know the reasons why he feels the way he does. He must look to the cause rather than to the symptoms. He writes of examining the grounds of enthusiasm, of looking into the nature of vanity and bringing into play counteracting forces and reasons. In this last lies the key to Shaftesburean method as expounded in the Soliloquy. It is the belief

45. R.Cudworth. 'The Plastick Life of Nature' in C.A.Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists, pp 288-294.

that the passions could for the most part be subjected to control by the consideration of the opinions which gave rise to them. In Stoic terms, it meant that 'sense impressions' could be modified by our willingness to give assent to them, by our judgment about them. Merely thinking calmly about the reasons for our passions or feelings will help to moderate their influence over us. Again we see that implicit in this is Shaftesbury's concern with stability in conduct:

'The same must happen in respect of anger, ambition, love, desire, and the other passions from whence I frame the different notion I have of interest. For as these passions veer, my steerage veers; and I make alternately now this, now that, to be my course and harbour. The man in anger has a different happiness from the man in love. And the man lately become covetous has a different notion of satisfaction from what he had before when he was liberal. Even the man in humour has another thought of interest and advantage than the man out of humour, or in the least disturbed. The examination, therefore, of my humours, and the inquiry after my passions, must necessarily draw along with it the search and scrutiny of my opinions, and the sincere consideration of my scope and end. And thus the study of human affection cannot fail of leading me towards the knowledge of human nature and of myself.' 46

Shaftesbury then gives a brief description of what might be said on behalf of this philosophy. In distinction from charges made against philosophy in the Bible - that it is vain, deceitful, or 'vain jangling' - Shaftesbury asserts that it is none of these things. Nor, he continues does it derive its identity and name from the nicety of the speculation involved. Shaftesbury's philosophy is justified in terms of its being superior to all other kinds of learning, all 'sciences and occupations', and that which acts as a measure for the just proportioning of our efforts in these other directions. Moreover, philosophy is prior to religion:

'By this science religion itself is judged, spirits are searched, prophecies proved, miracles distinguished: the sole measure and standard being taken from moral rectitude, and from the discernment of what is sound and just in the affections. For if the tree is known only by its fruits, my first endeavour must be to distinguish the true taste of fruits, refine my palate, and establish a just relish in the kind. So that to bid me judge authority by morals, whilst the rule of morals is supposed dependent on more authority and will, is the same in reality as to bid me see with my eyes shut, measure without a standard, and count without arithmetic.' 47

In his justification, then, Shaftesbury defends his concept of philosophy against the arguments of the clergymen. However, it is to the prevalent misconception of philosophy by others of his contemporaries that he returns.

Having given consideration to the philosophies of the scholastics, and the physiologists (Descartes), he refers next to those speculations which centre upon the nature and composition of ideas. The target would appear to be Locke, but could well be extended to cover all who were engaged in the controversy over 'innate ideas'.⁴⁸ Shaftesbury says that he is quite prepared to engage in such speculation provided that they will lead to his knowing more about himself in a moral way. Again the criteria is that he should approve in an hour's time the ideas that he now approves, or, in other words, that the consistency of behaviour that has been shown to be one of his fundamental requirements of a philosophical training is to be attained. He then illustrates the changeable view by a passage which is taken from his notebooks, which describes how subject to vicissitudes was the mind, and particularly that of Shaftesbury. By implication, the counter to

47. *Characteristics* i, 193.

48. John W. Yolton, Chapter II, in which there is an account of the background to the debate about innate principles and innate ideas before Locke and shortly after the appearance of the *Essay*.

this is to be found in the philosophy that he recommends.

The significance of the passage and the one following lies in Shaftesbury's ability to set the concerns of philosophy firmly down amongst the concerns of his readers, as he construed them.⁴⁹ Riches, fame, society, pleasure, are named as suitable objects upon which to practise philosophy. Shaftesbury's requirement is once more stated as being an account of the 'disturbances and fluctuations' of the mind, their origin and how they can be managed, and brought under control.

Having satisfied of his investigation of this line of attack, Shaftesbury diverts for a time onto another track which would also be interesting to his reader. Consideration is given to the question of why a man who professes to write for his own entertainment should bother to appear in print at all. Shaftesbury suggests that he had intended to have a few copies of his work printed for friends, and that he has not deterred his printer from making as many others as he might wish. For himself, he ~~claimed~~, somewhat ingenuously, indifference in respect of the reception of his 'amusements' by the public.

This is then extended to a consideration of the role of the press and censorship. The press of itself, argues Shaftesbury is neither good nor bad. He suggests that the system which affords the means for so many men of the cloth to enter the fray of disputation, should not be denigrated by them. To make his point wittily, Shaftesbury was not beyond assuming a naivety and simplicity which hardly

49. Characteristicks i, 195 paragraphs 2 and 3.

fitted with his other reflections. Here , he argues for the freedom of the press and manages an aside upon the ~~al~~ergy, both of which could be regarded as political in a broad sense.

Shaftesbury then returns to his consideration of the world of philosophy. Philosophy is badly taught and in consequence is out of favour. The instruction afforded by the world is that to follow Interest is the key to successful philosophy. However, the world is rather less helpful in telling a man wherein that Interest lies. Pleasure cannot be taken as a rule of good, since it is changeable. Moreover, it leads to man himself being changeable, since having pursued and satisfied one appetite or pleasure, he pursues another. Shaftesbury claims that his philosophy leads to the primacy of honesty.

'But if honesty be my delight, I know no other consequence from indulging such a passion than that of growing better natured, and enjoying more and more the pleasures of society...' 50

Once more, Shaftesbury is at pains to emphasise the social dimension of his philosophy, how it makes man more sociable and more desirous of moving in society. It is important to remark this, especially since the Moralists, and indeed the early part of the Soliloquy suggest that the proper place for philosophising is outside society, by oneself or in the sole company of one's genius .

Shaftesbury then considers that, if the only pleasure that can be freely indulged is the 'honest and moral kind', how are other sources of pleasure to be reconciled to this, how may they be prevented from undermining this other pleasure? He speaks of maintaining

himself in his moral fortress, against the assaults of a corrupt interest and 'wrong self', and by rhetorical presentation holds an imagined discourse with himself, a soliloquy, in order to beat off the seductions of these enemies from without. H asks:

'Can there be strength of mind, can there be command over oneself, if the ideas of pleasure, the suggestions of fancy, and the strong pleadings of appetite and desire are not often withstood, and the imaginations soundly reprimanded and brought under subjection?' 51

Shaftesbury was most probably drawing upon his own experiences in this and some of the earlier passages. Possibly for this reason, so that he should not appear to be going off at a tangent, he endeavours to share these experiences with such men as poets. He describes such creatures of the imagination as Melpomene, the muse which represents the fear of death, the scourge of virtuous qualities, and patroness of cowardice and effeminacy. In contrast to these Shaftesbury introduces the muses Calliope, Clio and Urania, the muses of epic poetry, history, and astronomy (natural science). The moral lesson that these last together present is described:

'She (Calliope) shows us that by this just compliance we are made happiest; and that the measure of a happy life is not from the fewer or more suns we behold, the fewer or more breaths we draw, or meals we repeat, but from the having once lived well, acted our part handsomely, and made our exit cheerfully, and as became us.' 52

He continues in this vein for some time, considering alternate attractions and temptations that present themselves, usually as enchantresses or temptresses, in a form of prose poetry or figura-

51. Ibid., i, 202.

52. Ibid., i, 204.

tive writing clearly designed to appeal to a less specific audience, an audience with aspirations to literary achievement or judgment. At the same time, Shaftesbury is spelling out the moral lesson, albeit in disguised form for anyone with the capacity to form his own judgment. In this he echoes Horatian fables, preferring to point rather than to postulate. At the end Shaftesbury even turns his soliloquising method upon this technique, arguing that to pre-empt the imagination with induced fancies might be better than to allow the real desires and temptations to take possession of the mind.

'Every man indeed who is not absolutely beside himself, must of necessity hold his fancies under some kind of discipline and management. The stricter this discipline is, the more the man is rational and in his wits. The looser it is the more fantastical he must be, and the nearer to the madman's state. This is a business which can never stand still. I must always be winner or loser at the game. Either I work upon my fancies, or they on me. If I give quarter, they will not. There can be no truce, no suspension of arms between us. The one or the other must be superior and have the command. For if the fancies are left to themselves, the government of course must be theirs. And then, what difference between such a state and madness?'. 53

In this fashion he once more drives home his views. Moving from one approach to another as he thinks might best suit to varied tastes of his readers. He argues that the need for there to be one voice in a household, or family, is analogous to the need for one voice in the self. All others must be subordinate.

His conclusion is that even if we are not morally improved by the practice of philosophy that he is advocating, at least there will be some degree of social improvement, and enable better description.

'And whether this (the soliloquising method) be of any use towards making us either wiser or happier, I am confident it must help to ~~make~~ us wittier and politer. It must, beyond any other science, teach us the turns of humour and passion, the variety of manners the justness of characters, and truth of things, which when we rightly understand we may naturally describe.' 54

Shaftesbury ends this part of the discussion with a frank admission of his imitation of the 'best genius and most gentleman-like of Roman poets', namely Horace. He may not be able to emulate his wit, says Shaftesbury, but he can seek to learn something of his 'honesty and good-humour'.

The closing section of the Soliloquy is a review of the argument; it is also the point at which Shaftesbury is able to remind his reader of particular points which he might feel they may overlook. He remarks, for instance, that it is more likely to lead to virtue and good sense, if the individual in this age, pursues the calling of Virtuoso, rather than^{*} 'improved sophistry and pedantic learning'. We may recall Shaftesbury's analogy with the dancing master in order to correct any tendency to view Shaftesbury's rude Nature as being in any way akin to that associated with Rousseau. In Shaftesbury's opinion, the choice before the youth of the early 18th century was that of pedantry and the schools, or the fashionable and illiterate world. He contrasts the opportunities available in the world of classical Greece.⁵⁵

In contradistinction to the books produced by formalists, Shaftesbury points to those who would write of man and manners. These writers must, he says, have some appreciation of moral and poetic

54. Ibid., i, 211.

55. Ibid., i, 215 fn.

*/ ...than that of scholar. 'Rude Nature' is thought to be a better guide than

truth, 'the beauty of sentiments' and 'the sublime of character', and what Shaftesbury calls 'interior numbers'. Moreover, this requirement is extended beyond the writer and into the wider group of those who aspire to pass judgment:

'One who aspires to the character of a man of breeding and politeness is careful to form his judgment of arts and sciences upon right models of perfection. If he travels to Rome, he inquires which are the truest pieces of architecture, the best remains of statues, the best paintings of a Raphael or Carraccio. However antiquated, rough, or dismal they may appear to him at first sight, he resolves to view them over and over, till he has brought himself to relish them, and finds their hidden graces and perfections.' 56

For the man of breeding and politeness, as well as for the illustrious and noble youth faced with such an unenviable choice, Shaftesbury points the way to a 'right taste in life and manners'. He advocates practice in the way that it is necessary for a musician to practice, not because of any inherent incapacity or defect, but simply because it is necessary to practice in order to become better. This is the philosophy, focussed upon morality and moral judgment, the latter extending beyond mere decision-making narrowly conceived, that Shaftesbury promulgated. Importantly, it was an activity and a method as opposed to a systematic body of argued principles. Shaftesbury at this point is concerned with the method rather than the matter, although such a distinction might not have been readily accepted by him.

Shaftesbury also details the means by which bad taste, or false relish might be acquired. Bad music should not be listened to, gaudy colours and superficial attractions in painting avoided, bad

behaviour also must not be practised. They lead to corruption and loss of virtue. This inclination towards the corrupt is found in his discussion of the reading matter of his contemporaries. Most men read indiscriminately, he argued. They read for diversion and do not suspect the falling off in standards that comes from reading literature of a low quality. He himself, though this is not stated, is said to have kept by him, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Xenophon's Memorabilia, and appears to have followed his own recommendations, excepting only what was 'required reading' for his work. The distinction however, lay between choosing one's reading and letting oneself read whatever was pressed into the hand. Shaftesbury's opinion of the generality of much contemporary literature was such as would have consigned most of it to wrapping paper. Its moral effect was to corrupt uncertain tastes.

Shaftesbury objected to breadth of reading, since there were few enough books that were 'good' influences, wide reading led to greater exposure to bad influences. He attacked old plays, old sermons, old tales which lay in the house for generations, influencing people for the worse. The average literary consumption comprised a book of pious meditations and reflections, of which a little was more than a sufficiency for most people and for the rest, escapism 'holiday, diversion, fancy,'; tales of far-off lands, of savages, undiscovered continents and Indians. Shaftesbury looked to a revulsion from this kind of reading matter which might occasion an improvement in literary taste.

Significantly, he was particularly opposed to the description of other societies, real or imagined. It was not merely that Locke had

appeared to favour them, rather Shaftesbury played this aspect down, but that they gave rise to a relativity in morals. The existence of other societies with different mores was seen as a threat to standards in his own country. Against this Shaftesbury argued for the basis of virtue being fixed in nature, which underlay all the superficial differences between societies.

Philosophically, it is important to record Shaftesbury's movement towards an animated nature. Previously, he has inclined to refer to nature in the sense of the state of affairs that exists before instruction or modification by man, a state rather of moral potential than actuality. In this way, a man could be said to have more of a natural aptitude for movement than another, or more natural ability. Yet towards the close of the Soliloquy Shaftesbury is using the idea of nature metaphysically, to designate some ruling principle of the universe. In explication we might distinguish between the stuff of nature, and the principle of nature, as one might distinguish between the stuff of history, and historicism.

Shaftesbury's idea of Nature has been given attention elsewhere, and it is not our concern to refine upon this analysis.⁵⁷ Rather it is our concern to remark upon the transition that Shaftesbury is making and to illustrate it. Writing that virtue, like harmony, is fixed in nature and not changeable or relative, Shaftesbury continues:

'For things are stubborn and will not be as we fancy them, or as the fashion varies, but as they stand in nature. Now whether the writer be poet, philosopher, or of what-

57. Grean, op.cit., Chapter Four.

ever kind, he is in truth no other than a copyist after nature. His style may be differently suited to the different times he lives in, or to the different humour of his age, or nation: his manner, his dress, his colouring may vary; but if his drawing be uncorrect or his design contrary to nature, his piece will be found when it comes thoroughly to be examined. For Nature will not be mocked. The prepossession against her can never be very lasting. Her decrees and instincts are powerful and her sentiments inbred. She has a strong party abroad, and as strong a one withingourselves; and when any slight is put upon her, she can soon turn the reproach and make large reprisals on the taste and judgment of her antagonists.' 58

The writer, knowing that nature has this prerogative, will attend to the reformation of his taste, asserts Shaftesbury. The author will seek to avoid the monstrous, the merely fashionable, the ephemeral, but will instead follow the best models and reaffirm the primacy of good taste.

As for religion, it is left with little, Shaftesbury with mock seriousness, disclaims any interest. Religious writings are divinely inspired and are not therefore to be the concern of writers. The divines know how to interpret the scriptures: the writers know how to imitate nature. They are to keep to their separate lasts.

'It becomes not those who are uninspired from heaven and uncommissioned from earth, to search with curiosity into the original of those holy rites and records by law established. Should we make such an attempt, we should in probability find the less satisfaction the further we presumed to carry our speculations. Having dared once to quit the authority and direction of the law, we should easily be subject to heterodoxy and error when we had no better warrant left us for the authority of our sacred symbols than the integrity, candour, and disinterestness of their compilers and registers.' 59

The true nature of Shaftesbury's opposition to the Church can be inferred here. He is not opposed in principle to religion. He is

58. Characteristics i, 228.

59. Ibid., i, 230

opposed to its institutionalisation - the reference to 'by law established' - although he modified his position here to allow for the social control function to be exercised over the vulgar. He is especially opposed to the priesthood, the transmitters and interpreters of the canon. He thought that a role more like that of the office of Herald was suitable to their pretensions. The interpretation of dogma was irrelevant to the needs of his sort of audience, and threatened to lead them into error.

The conclusion of the Soliloquy points to the need to practice the philosophy in areas where authority does not attempt control, that is outside religious speculation. This soliloquising, together with 'polite reading, and converse with mankind of the better sort' will suffice to equip man with the character Shaftesbury has been pushing towards with his idea of author, the "gentleman philosopher".

In an overview, it can be seen that Shaftesbury is attacking three areas, at three important points in the culture of his times. These are religion, politics and literature. The attacks are not really pressed home to the institutional level, although this is sometimes implied. In this sense he may be regarded as a conservative critic seeking to modify or circumvent what he did not like. The religious writers, designated as zealots, were marked down as self-interested and sources of 'bad' literature; where bad meant morally debilitating. The influence of the Court upon contemporary taste and political behaviour was seen to be of a similar kind. The poverty of prevalent literary standards, he attributed to ignorance, and economic avarice, rather than to corruption among the audience. In the Soliloquy this constitutes the continued critical phase, which

supported and extended work done in the Letter and in the Essay.

In the Soliloquy, Shaftesbury put forward an alternative practice for the individual, a philosophy which would enable the individual to form his own judgment, in accordance with accepted models and standards, and which, importantly, would be acceptable in a man of the world. It would be a desirable attribute of the modern man, to have formed his own moral and aesthetic judgment. Shaftesbury provided the method by means of which this was to be brought about.

In an important sense, the Shaftesburean view had been stated by the end of the Soliloquy, although the content of the Miscellaneous Reflections was to go a stage further in filling out the picture of criticism of particular aspects of contemporary mores. The practices and pretensions of Church and Court were particularly examined, and the 'sapping method' or miscellaneous way of writing was again applied. But Shaftesbury had managed a fairly comprehensive attack upon those bastions of culture and belief that he wished to see pulled down and replaced; he had even gone some way toward their replacement.

It is important to check here that Shaftesbury had not presented anything approaching a comprehensive attack upon the culture of his age. Although the Church was left little in the way of a spiritual role, being but a doubtful adjunct of the state which would serve to guide the lower orders, or act as a College of Heralds, Shaftesbury never attacked as clearly other important institutions such as the Executive, Legislature or Armed Forces, nor did he suggest an institutional alternative to the 'schools' that he had denounced. Shaftesbury's attack was limited in its scope, however wide-ranging in its method. The opportunity to seek the improvement of morals

through the Society for the Reformation of Manners existed, but Shaftesbury's audience as conceived by the author, appears very little concerned with society as a whole.

As such, the picture of Shaftesbury as a social critic that emerges is one of counter-cultural activity. By this is meant deviant cultural activity, aimed at setting up within the existent social order an alternative set of cultural values. The existing social order may be accepted through the lack of real desire to change it - through conservatism; or it may be accepted because it is seen as economically the life - support of the deviant

culture; or it may be accepted because it is thought to be impossible to change it. In general, an attitude is formed by means of which the counter-cultural activity can be maintained with the minimum of interference from the main culture. Although counter-culture may be 'parasitic' upon the main social body and culture, it is hardly likely to be seen as such by its supporters. Shaftesbury had, at this time established the possibility of a counter-culture with his claim for liberty in private conversation and the new regulation of morals and taste. Counter-culture is one aspect of polite society, a mode of existence dependent upon the suspension of other values from the wider world.

Thus, the socialisation of philosophy began to shrink in its dimensions. A total victory would have been achieved by the transformation of the moral and intellectual basis of society, Shaftesbury probably never envisaged such a programme when he started upon his social criticism. He settled instead for the transformation of a part of his society, aiming at one time at the noble youth, at another

at fine gentlemen. It is not appropriate therefore to think in terms of the total replacement of one cluster of cultural values with another on the scale of the whole society, but amongst the select only, the group of cultivated friends.

These statements can be made on the basis of an appreciation of the early part of Shaftesbury's work in the Characteristics. This is where the logic of such a diverse approach, and diffuse method, leads. Its weakness is in some respects confirmed by Shaftesbury's having to go over some ground afresh in the Miscellaneous Reflections, but the overall purpose of the replacement of one set of values with another, within a limited social context, remains unaltered by this. Shaftesbury's purpose in this sense may have been only half-conscious when he first embarked upon his writing. For the most part, he had thus far been content to play the part of Horace, criticising from out of town. The continuation required that he come up with an alternative, an alternative culture to the one that he criticised. It seems probable that some of his readers would not share the more positive views with him, concurring only in the criticism, and this is certainly a consideration to be kept in mind by the historian.

It is to a briefer consideration of the 'positive' thinking of Shaftesbury, the suggested alternatives of the Inquiry and the Moralists that attention must now be turned. In terms of the whole, of the Characteristics, Shaftesbury can still be seen to be socialising philosophy, but this has increasingly become the socialisation of a philosophy.

CHAPTER NINE.

THE SOCIALISATION OF A PHILOSOPHY: INQUIRY AND MORALISTS

In the Inquiry and the Moralists, Shaftesbury changed his method of delivery and his content. He was dealing with a rather different problem, and was not able to resume the multiple criticism and diversity of argument until he added the Miscellaneous Reflections. His problem now was to offer alternative views to those which existed in areas which he had subjected to criticism. He had to become positive, to become 'formal', a dogmatist, to 'profess'.

It is in respect of the Inquiry and the Moralists that Shaftesbury usually is regarded as a philosopher in the academic concept of the term. In the tradition of philosophy, Shaftesbury's efforts here might well be more original than in other parts of the Characteristicks, although there is something to be said for looking carefully at the Soliloquy. In the broader, less academic sense of philosophy that Shaftesbury might have endorsed, in speculation and in the social dimension of the expression of thought, Shaftesbury's two treatises are but part of an overall work, all of which can be said to be concerned with the socialisation of philosophy.

Since Shaftesbury chooses to change his approach, and since these areas have received rather more attention than other parts of the Characteristicks, it may not be inappropriate to acknowledge that a change of approach is thought useful here. Instead of following Shaftesbury in the multiplicity of his arguments, the diversity of critical approaches, we shall be concerned rather to look at certain

areas in the two treatises which demonstrate or identify the activity or enterprise that we have called the socialisation of philosophy. The implications of Shaftesbury's arguments for the society in which he wrote will be followed through to a greater degree. The focus will lie with penetration rather than with the comprehensive nature of Shaftesbury's activity. In particular, the emphasis will be placed upon areas which would seem to have been of particular interest to readers of the Characteristics and whose significance has been occluded in the search for an interpretation of Shaftesbury that would reveal him as a consistent thinker in academic terms. Broadly, the route traced will, however, follow the Inquiry and the Moralists. The latter in particular can be seen to illustrate the model of how philosophical discourse could be conducted, as distinct from any particular views that Shaftesbury chooses to put forward.

At the end of the preceding chapter it was suggested that Shaftesbury was moving towards some kind of counter culture, a society or social group to be populated by men of the same tastes and inclinations which, though having within it collective thought-strains which could not exist together with those that prevailed among the mainstream of contemporary society, would as a group be able to co-exist with that wider society. In figurative language, this was how Shaftesbury seems to have interpreted the Tablet of Cebes to which he attached particular importance. The elite, the sub-group, was to be made up of those of the necessary intellectual and moral qualities, able to withstand the temptations of pleasure and other diversions from the narrow path of virtue, truth and

beauty.¹

Interwoven with this progress towards a counter culture, with a counter ideology, are to be found statements which point to Shaftesbury as being the spokesman for a particular social class, the ruling class, the aristocracy and the higher reaches of the gentry, and keeping such remarks as these to the fore also helps along an appreciation of Shaftesbury. Gradations which appear in the discourse, suggestions of different levels of moral consciousness, reflect in part the social distinctions that were often the conscious product of Shaftesbury's pen. The analogy of good-breeding in manners and mind, already noticed, is but one indicator of how closely these matters were related.

On the other hand, although the broader social context and ideology will be considered, this should not lead to too rapid an assimilation of Shaftesbury's views with those associated in a later generation with Bolingbroke, the Craftsman and Country sentiment in politics and culture. Despite similarities in ideas, there was a considerable change in the political circumstances of the two periods, that would caution against such an assimilation on grounds of ideas and social structure. Here we are not concerned with Hanoverian society and politics but with that of Anne, and the war of the Spanish Succession, for this was Shaftesbury's world, a 'divided society'.

The ideological interpretation serves to heighten our concern with society. The ideological approach buttresses the assumption made throughout, that the life-situation of the writer, Shaftesbury

1. Rand, Second Characters pp xxii-xxiv

should be taken into account together with the social, political, economic and technological context in which he writes. To suggest that Shaftesbury was failing intellectually in not pursuing more liberal or democratic views, for example, is not entirely a moral judgment, but prior to such judgments there is a need of delimitation of parameters, in order to proceed to an historical appraisal of the third Earl. Even in his day, he would have been 'radical' in attacking the institutions that he did attack, the Church and the Universities, and to criticise in abstract terms is sometimes less than fair, and leads to distortion in our appreciation.

Anticipating once again the continued review of the Characteristics, and these two treatises, it can be said, then, that there are three aspects of the account which follows which may be kept before the mind. Firstly, that the approach is less closely following the text, but is rather more selective. Secondly, that there is a concern to highlight Shaftesbury's move towards a counter culture, and thirdly, that this transition is accompanied by reflections about the nature of the society in which Shaftesbury lived, and how he viewed it.

The treatment of the subject matter of the Inquiry was, according to Shaftesbury, formal. There are considerations that would lead us to conclude that it was in fact closer to mock-formal, and that Shaftesbury takes the form but not entirely the necessary seriousness of tone that would at this time be expected from a serious contribution. In fact, changing styles, and the tendency to move away from refutation point-by-point, the divisions and subdivisions exemplified in older works, left Shaftesbury room for

manoeuvre.² However, Shaftesbury's opening remarks attacking the association of religious belief and moral conduct, sound the note for a vigorous and sweeping consideration of virtue or merit.

Echoing Bayle, he asks if the commonsense association of virtue and religion is correct, and if morality is dependent upon religious belief.³ Against this view he notes that infrequently are we interested in religious beliefs of someone whom we have been told is trustworthy. As an aside, he remarks upon the difficulty of writing about religion at a time when the religious writers have been so alarmed 'of late', and when in the fashionable world, men of wit and fashion believe that they can manage without religion.

It may be remarked that Shaftesbury has, by these two approaches, already suggested a somewhat wider readership than would be required if he were content to merely communicate with the professional philosopher, the university teachers, or the clergyman interested in this subject matter. Shaftesbury shows a greater consciousness of what is happening in the world, and endeavours to relate his exposition in its early stages to those who could also connect abstraction with a knowledge of early 18th century English society. This approach Shaftesbury endeavours to sustain throughout the

2. As an example of such an older work Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy may be consulted. (London: J.M. Dent, Everyman Library, 1932) pp 126-9.

3. C.F. Bayle quoted in Hazard, op cit., p 328 'Morals and religion far from being inseparable, are completely independent of each other. A man can be moral without being religious. An atheist who lives a virtuous life is not a creature of wonder, something outside the natural order, a freak. There is nothing more extraordinary about an atheist living a virtuous life than there is about a Christian leading a wicked one.' A connection with Bayle appears at Characteristics 1, 254, also.

Inquiry. His appeal tends to be to the evidence which the reader can experience or witness for himself, rather than to the rigour of logic or demonstration, or to the previous writers on the subject matter of morals and religion.

Shaftesbury then establishes that there are several kinds of religious belief, according to the view of deity that is taken. He identifies Theism, Atheism, Polytheism, and Daemonism, and possible combinations between categories. He is unwilling to suggest that the individual will necessarily adhere to one or another of these particular categories of religious belief, taking the sensible but academically difficult course:

'There are few who think always consistently, or according to one certain hypothesis, upon any subject so abstruse and intricate as the cause of all things, and the economy or government of the universe. For 'tis evident in the case of the most devout people, even by their own confession, that there are times when their faith can hardly support them in the belief of a supreme Wisdom, and that they are often tempted to judge disadvantageously of a providence and a just administration in the whole.

That alone, therefore, is to be called a man's opinion, which is of any other the most habitual to him and occurs upon most occasions.' 4

To ascertain what are a man's true opinions is, therefore, a difficult task, as men's opinions vary within the spectrum of religious belief categories that he has outlined, only the perfect Atheist being excluded from some share of belief in religion. This may well have been a reflection upon the persecuting spirits of the times, and upon those who sought to impose religious belief by conformity to certain practices or articles. For Shaftesbury, the task is to show how the varied, and varying types of religion

are compatible with an honest and moral character, or 'may possibly consist with virtue and merit'.⁵

More broadly Shaftesbury can be seen as standing between two contending parties. The orthodox defenders of established views, the Clergymen who insisted that the moral corruption of the age was in some way a function of declining religious belief and practice; and the 'Free' writers, such as Blount and Toland, who sought to establish rational religion/natural religion devoid of support from revealed or scriptural sources. Between these lines of conflict, Shaftesbury sought to make a case for the autonomy of morals, sufficient for most men. He also sought to do this while raising the level of the debate, its tenor and tone, by effecting a change in presentation that he thought would lead to a greater acceptability of his arguments.

In fact, in separating morals and religion, Shaftesbury may well have hoped to see a restoration of the former while the latter was to some extent in a state of civil war. The consciousness of the supposedly close relationship between morals and religious belief was what caused the more socially conscious of the religious writers to throw up their hands.

If morality, as it stood, was under threat, or secured to a religion that itself was under threat, then Shaftesbury's reaction is clear. He will establish an alternative, which will base morals

5. Ibid., I, 242. The first Part of the Inquiry can be regarded as setting up the problem of the relationship of religion and morals. Here, I have tried to bring out the wider implications of Shaftesbury's approach, to point towards the interaction between the author and his readers, rather than to examine the content and consistency of his ideas per se.

upon the design of the physical universe. Shaftesbury therefore deals with the relation of man the individual to the greater whole; the family, the country, the animal kingdom, the animal and vegetable kingdom, the universe, being invoked as Shaftesbury moves from the order of one to the order of another; he presents the idea of a system (in contrast to atomist individualism). He then puts this in ethical terms:

'And if it be allowed that there is in like manner a system of all things; and a universal nature, there can be no particular being or system which is not either good or ill in that general one the universe; for if it be insignificant and of no use, it is a fault or imperfection, and consequently ill in the general system.' 6

This enabled Shaftesbury to move to a consideration of the nature of good and ill. He was only prepared to say that something was absolutely and entirely ill if that thing could be demonstrated to contribute to the good of no system whatsoever. He then modified this to allow further that intentionality must be present in the case of man, suggesting that a man with the plague would be excepted from being called an ill man because this was hardly the result of his wishes. Here, Shaftesbury introduced his idea of 'affection', representing man's inclination to do something, or what has here been termed intention. He then proceeds to an examination of affections, to discover which are good and natural, and which are ill and unnatural. He points to the importance of a creature's natural temper or bent in the determination of that creature's goodness or 'ill', implying a certain innateness of inclination.

6. Ibid., i, 246.

In fact, Shaftesbury may be seen to be trying to steer a compromise course between an ethics founded in the emotions, and one founded on reason or rationality. In terms of his contemporary Locke, he may have shared the view that the mind at birth is a tabula rasa, and hence the invalidity of innate principles of the propositional kind (All men Know that there is a God.), but Shaftesbury, and even Locke, wanted to allow innate dispositions, tendencies which manifested themselves in the mind analogously to the process of growing physically. Locke was not always viewed in this light, and possibly Shaftesbury was among those who believed Locke's rejection of innate principles, included a rejection of innate dispositions. For Shaftesbury, the importance of innateness is best seen by looking to his emphasis upon breeding, in which certain basic requirements had to be fulfilled before the process could be started.

Having settled something of good and ill, - Shaftesbury avoided 'evil', possibly because of its religious connotations - he then turns to the ideas of virtue and merit which relate to man alone. In addition to the assimilation of the inputs provided through the senses, the mind is active in reflecting upon these, and 'the heart' sides with the judgments that are made or rejects them. Shaftesbury's account of the mental powers is pretty sketchy here, but his conclusion reminds us of what he had written to Locke as far back as 1689:⁷

'Thus the several motions, inclinations, passions, dispositions, and consequent carriage and behaviour of creatures in the various parts of life, being in several

views or perspectives represented to the mind, which readily discerns the good and ill towards the species or public, there arises a new trial or exercise of the heart, which must either rightly and soundly affect what is just and right, and disaffect what is contrary, or corruptly affect what is ill and disaffect what is worthy and good.' 8

Virtue and virtuous behaviour are related solely to a sense of the public good, the 'notion of a public interest'.⁹ In a non-technical sense, it is not difficult to perceive Shaftesbury's maintaining close contact with the views of his readers. Hereabouts, he is concerned to explore some of the commonplaces of ethics; the importance of an act being intended before it can be called virtuous; the ethical position if a mistake is made.

Virtue is found spread ~~unequally~~ between men, and in the several characters, that is types, of men. Shaftesbury, as he had been unwilling to denominate any thing as absolutely ill,

is unwilling to denominate any man as absolutely without virtue.

Shaftesbury concludes the first Book of the Inquiry with an examination of how this principle of virtue relates to the categorisation of religious belief that he has given at the outset. He argues that religious belief cannot diminish virtue which is grounded upon an innate sense of right and wrong. Secondly, religion can undermine the principle of virtue, is capable of doing great harm or good, but atheism will not affect the issue one way or another. Thirdly Shaftesbury considers the effect of religion in stimulating

8. Characteristics i, 252.

9. Shaftesbury's use of public, sometimes implies the species, at others, his countrymen, and sometimes politically active men.

affections which are unnatural, opposed to the natural sense of right and wrong. Here he suggests that rewards and punishments devalue the natural inclination to virtuous behaviour, making virtue a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Further, he opposes the idea of a deity that is not based upon a concept of benevolence, and of good to all.

Insofar, as the last two can be related to the form of Protestantism then put forward by the established Church, or even by the Dissenters, Shaftesbury may be seen to be undermining the contemporary view, in favour of the elevation of an independent ethic of virtue and merit. He is repeating, in polished form, views that he had held since before 1699, and it may be surmised that the impact of such heterodoxy would not diminish over the twelve years that elapsed between the appearance of the original unauthorised Inquiry, and its appearance in the Characteristics. Here, Shaftesbury uses such topics to build up a case, an argument to replace the traditional views. His intention may be seen as attempting to achieve a philosophical victory in addition to one in the field of manners and taste.

In the third case, he allows that atheism may tend toward a view of the universe as lacking design and order, and to the suspicion of ills arising from this lack of order, and this, according to Shaftesbury may lead to an embittered temper and a disaffection to virtue.

However, on examining the case for a perfect theism and virtue and merit being co-existent, Shaftesbury happily concludes that a just appreciation of order, and the evidence of a divine mind, is a

buttress which supports the natural inclination towards virtue and aversion to ill.

Shaftesbury's argument in the first Book of the Inquiry is then, somewhat circuitous, deriving our knowledge of good and ill from a naturalistic, appreciation of the interrelationships of systems, and proceeding to religious knowledge based upon the attribution of responsibility for this system to a divine mind.

In the second Book of the Inquiry, Shaftesbury examines the obligations to virtuous behaviour. The virtuous character must stand well-affected towards his species. Shaftesbury emphasises the social involvement here:

'To stand thus well affected, and to have one's affections right and entire, not only in respect of oneself but of society and the public, this is rectitude, integrity of virtue. And to be wanting in any of these, or to have their contraries, is depravity, corruption, and vice.' 10

He examines the relationship between self-interest and social, concluding that the emphasis placed solely on the former by Hobbes, derives from mistaken identification of what self-interest really is. Again Shaftesbury may be seen as attacking a prevalent ideology of individualism, but also as attempting to transform it, often using a shared terminology, into a different social ethic. This may be contrasted with his treatment of Hobbist thinking in the Essay.

Shaftesbury then proceeds more formally to examine the natural affections, the self affections and the unnatural affections. The latter are wholly vicious, the others may be good or virtuous, ill or evil 'according to their degree'. The natural affections lead

10. Characteristics i, 280.

to the good of the public, the self affections to the good of the self and Shaftesbury wishes to show that a just balance has to be struck, especially in respect of the last. By inference, it would seem that Shaftesbury argues for the uneven distribution of the affections, and for the ability of man by reason and training to make up deficiencies, diminish excesses. This tends to ^{be} put forward descriptively, and does not take the form of an overt injunction to the reader to correct the balance of his affections. Shaftesbury for example, turns to the animal kingdom for examples of animal group behaviour, and writes of race, creatures, species, blood.¹¹

Shaftesbury concludes his examination of the natural, the selfish, and the unnatural affections, by informing his reader that no man can be said to be ill or vicious, except by the deficiency of natural affection, the violence of selfish, or by the possession of those which are plainly unnatural, and :

'On the other side, the happiness and good of virtue has been proved from the contrary affect of other affections, such as are according to Nature, and the economy of the species or kind. We have cast up all those particulars from whence (as by way of addition and subtraction) the main sum or general account of happiness is either augmented or diminished. And if there be no article exceptionable in this scheme of moral arithmetic, the subject may be said to have an evidence as great as that which is found in numbers or mathematics.' 12

11. It seems important to stress this since it helps to differentiate Shaftesbury from those who argued for natural religion in terms of order derived from a mechanistic or physical basis. Often these were intermixed. The Newtonians inclining to celestial order, as in the 'spacious firmament', and Hobbists to mechanics. vide A.O. Aldridge, 'Shaftesbury and the Deist Manifesto'. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society XLI, Part II. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1951. Margaret C. Jacob, op.cit., passim.
12. Characteristics 1, 336.

Despite his concluding paragraph, it seems unlikely that Shaftesbury anticipated carrying with him all his readers. In the Inquiry there was, therefore, something of a mix between critical undermining by implication, as with views on rewards and punishments, on self-interest, and the formal view of his own philosophy in Book One, and the examination of its implications, embraced under the obligations to virtue, in Book Two. As a formal thesis, it lacked definition for those times, and appears as having had order put upon it. The elements which have received attention here, beyond a representation of the shape of the argument, incline to showing Shaftesbury as he stands in terms of his reader. Shaftesbury's gentleman knew about order in the animal kingdom, of defective or ill-formed animals within the species, he knew about kinship and family, he knew about accounts and something of mathematics. These areas have been noticed as representing Shaftesbury use and usage in advancing philosophy on a broader front, albeit the philosophy that sapped rather than that which built. The last paragraph? Once more the social dimension is evident:

'Thus the wisdom of what rules, and is first and chief in Nature, has made it to be according to the private interest and good of every one to work towards the general good, which if a creature ceases to promote, he is actually so far wanting to himself, and ceases to promote his own happiness and welfare. He is on this account directly his own enemy, nor can he any otherwise be good or useful to himself than as he continues good to society, and to that whole of which he is himself a part. So that virtue, which of all excellences and beauties is the chief and most amiable; that which is the prop and ornament of human affairs; which upholds communities, maintains union, friendship, and correspondence amongst men; that by which countries as well as private families, flourish and are happy, and for want of which everything comely, conspicuous, great, and worthy, must perish and go to ruin; that single quality, thus beneficial to all society, and to mankind in general, is found equally a happiness and good

to each creature in particular, and is that by which alone man can be happy, and without which he must be miserable.' 13

The Moralists is, in its form, altogether different to the Inquiry. We know that Shaftesbury had undergone considerable personal strain in the period that fell between the original dates of composition, - 1699 for the Inquiry, and 1704/5 for the Moralists (as the Sociable Enthusiast). How then are we to view the Moralists as contributing to the socialisation of philosophy? Allowing a modified approach, a less detailed tracing of arguments, how does the Moralists contribute to a counter culture, how does it set out the concerns of Shaftesbury about the nature of the society in which he lived? In the remaining part of this chapter, it is to the Moralists and these questions that our attention will be given.

The Inquiry represents an attempt to meet the existing arbiters of philosophical discourse upon their terms. It is formal in appearance, and subject therefore to the judgment of formalists and professors. Yet Shaftesbury, as we have seen, had to a great degree renounced the doctrines of the Schools and Universities, and so had little to do in embracing their method. This was new oil in old bottles. If it is allowed that Shaftesbury has changed his audience, and no longer seeks favour of the incumbents of seats in academe, to persuade authority, then he has no need of their method.

Even were this insufficient reason for a change of approach, as

13. Characteristics, p 338. Shaftesbury's colophon demonstrates how well David Hume had emulated the sentiments of the man of virtue, in his study cited at the opening of Chapter Four above.

by itself it would be, Shaftesbury had another occasion for the change. He needed as a model, a means of showing how philosophy could be conducted under the injunctions of the Essay. It was not enough to assert the reasonableness of allowing speculative exchanges among friends if few of those friends had the training apposite to the conduct of such an exchange. Originally the Moralists, may have been concerned to fill this role, to show how philosophy could be managed among gentlemen. The Soliloquy had shown the private, the individual dimension, and the emphasis there upon writing and authors had suggested the public. The most congenial occasion for philosophical exchange, had been left. The Moralists, therefore, represents not merely the presentation of a philosophical view point, but an ostensive demonstration of how a philosophical conversation might be conducted. It is a study in manners as well as the exposition of philosophy.

The Moralists has gained a primacy among Shaftesbury's several treatises. His own description of the piece, suggests that it was a more important undertaking in the author's eyes than the Inquiry. His account in the fifth Miscellany continued:

' 'Tis not only at the bottom as systematical, didactic, and preceptive, as that other piece of formal structure; but it assumes withal another garb and more fashionable turn of wit. It conceals what is scholastical under the appearance of a polite work. It aspires to dialogue, and carries with it not only those poetic features of the pieces anciently called mimes; but it attempts to unite the several personages and characters in one action or story, within a determinate compass of time, regularly divided and drawn into different and proportioned scenes; and this, too, with a variety of styles, the simple, comic, rhetorical, and even the poetic or sublime, such as is the aptest to run into enthusiasm and extravagance.' 14

In the Soliloquy Shaftesbury had remarked upon the eclipse of the dialogue form as a means of speculative expression. In his view to use the dialogue would be unnatural because it would not represent faithfully the sort of conversation that ~~was~~ to be found amongst contemporary conversations. Hence the simple dialogue would appear spurious.

Moreover, Shaftesbury was averse to the prevailing manner of conducting philosophical exchanges by the public letter, evidenced by Locke amongst others, and the general charge and counter-charge of public debate which often followed the first publication. Shaftesbury sought to change this by offering an alternative mode for the exchange and expression of views.

Shaftesbury anticipated a time when the conduct of philosophical exchanges would be expressed within a small group of people, a group of friends who could be expected to be familiar with each other's views at least in outline. As such he may have mistaken the function of the philosophical letter, the public arena in which it stood and of the wider public to which appeal was made. Looking to the time when philosophical exchange could take its place among the ordinary conversation of ~~friends~~ Shaftesbury was in fact, presenting the possibility for independents to form their own judgment, through conversation and discussion, rather than their following the lead of one of the predominant fashions in thought.

In terms of the times Shaftesbury's aim can be likened to that sought after by Lord Falkland at Great Tew in a previous age, or the political gatherings at the seats of the Whig Lords in his own time, excepting only that the subject matter was to be philosophy, policy

rather than strategy.

In the Moralists Shaftesbury introduces his positive contribution with a short reflection upon the place of philosophy in his society. He writes of the reigning genius of gallantry and pleasure, and of the effective eclipse of serious discourse. Clearly the market, the audience, is, in principle, the same. At the present this is not so:

'(Philosophy) is no longer active in the world, nor can hardly, with any advantage, be brought upon the public stage. We have immured her, poor lady, in colleges and cells, and have set her servilely to such works as those in the mines. Empirics and pedantic sophists are her chief pupils. The school syllogism and the elixir are the choicest of her products. So far is she from producing statesmen, as of old, that hardly any man of note in the public cares to own the least obligation to her. If some maintain their acquaintance, ...'tis as the disciple of quality came to his lord and master, "secretly and by night".

But low as philosophy is reduced, if morals be allowed belonging to her, politics must undeniably be hers! For to understand the manners and constitutions of men in common., 'tis necessary to study men in particular, and know the creature as he is in himself, before we consider him in company, as he is interested in the State, or joined to any city or community. Nothing is more familiar than to reason concerning man in his confederate state and national relation, as he stands engaged to this or that society, by birth or naturalisation; yet to consider him as a citizen or commoner of the world, to trace his pedigree a step higher, and view his end and constitution in Nature itself, must pass, it seems, for some intricate or over-refined speculation.' 15

There was really a twofold problem, namely what to advance as philosophy and how to advance it. Shaftesbury's Letter and Essay had primarily been concerned with the clearing operation, the attack

15. Ibid., ii, 4-5.

upon established or entrenched positions, intellectual and social. The Soliloquy suggested a home-spun philosophy but was also to carry the attack along the lines of dominant cultural criticism in the arts. The Inquiry had suggested what might be advanced, the Moralists represents how it was to be advanced, in addition to a further amplification of the subject matter.

Shaftesbury was concerned not merely to advance a doctrine but also to advance a critical attitude. His view of the contemporary state of affairs, he epitomised: 'If learning comes across us, we count it pedantry; if morality, 'tis preaching'.¹⁶ On the one hand, there lay an aversion to learning because of the method by which it was communicated. On the other hand, there was the fact that society frowned upon any public display of learning, so that any serious discussion that lasted longer than a few minutes was the object of censure as being ill-mannered.

According to Shaftesbury his age was also intolerant of scepticism, quick to take sides in an argument, and highly credulous providing they could be allowed to believe. Earlier in his unpublished Adept Lady's Sect, he had described such credulity. The age of Shaftesbury was also the age of the Project and of the Bubble. Shaftesbury finds this wish to believe particularly a feature in natural sciences.

Against this sort of social and intellectual climate, Shaftesbury puts forward a case for scepticism. Scepticism appears as a preliminary rather than as an end in itself. He acknowledges that it must

16. Ibid., ii, 5.

prove disagreeable to contemporary taste (which suggests that Shaftesbury did not hope to persuade all his readers, perhaps), but he bases his case for scepticism upon its having been the basis of philosophical argument in classical times, and part of the education of youth of the 'better sort'. In support, the character of Philocles points to the spirit of scepticism as an attitude of mind:

'For above all things I loved ease, and of all philosophers those who reasoned most at their ease, and were never angry or disturbed...I looked upon this kind of philosophy as the prettiest, agreeablest, roving exercise of the mind possible to be imagined.'¹⁷

Conscious of contemporaries and their views as to what sceptics represented (generally, a threat to the ideology of the Church), Shaftesbury distinguishes between what he terms scepticism and the sort of ideas espoused by others of the same name : of sceptics: Shaftesbury has the character of Philocles disclaim any subversive intention in matters of religion. His unquestioning acceptance gives rise to some doubts about the validity of such a disclaimer in a professed sceptic.¹⁸

Philocles is represented as having been a sceptic. He is also a prefatory character, the means of introduction to the philosophical 'hero' Theocles. Philocles is urbane, a man of the town, of society. He represents the lesser philosophical alternative, which would possibly serve for the majority of the readers of the Characteristics, as a model of the thinking man. Even the impact of Theocles' discourse of which Philocles is to give an account, is diminished after the latter's return to the town and Palemon. Philocles represents

17. Ibid., ii, 18

18. Ibid.

a kind of pre-character, a prototype to whom the ordinary reader might aspire to emulate.

Shaftesbury moves from this stage to the more positively philosophical by having Philocles give expression to views which he has heard from Theocles, and which lead to the narrative exposition of philosophical conversations between the two.

The attributed cause of Palemon (probably Lord Somers) being in a melancholy disposition is love. It is not love in respect of affection for the opposite sex, but love which from fixing upon the person, moves to the mind, and from the appreciation of the mind of the individual to the appreciation of the societal relationships:

' "It views communities, friendships, relations, duties, and considers by what harmony of particular minds the general harmony is composed, and commonweal established.

"Nor satisfied even with public good in one community of men, it frames itself a nobler object, and with enlarged affection seeks the good of mankind. It dwells with pleasure amidst that reason and those orders on which this fair correspondence and goodly interest is established. Laws, constitutions, civil and religious rites: whatever civilises or polishes rude mankind; the sciences and arts, philosophy, morals, virtue; the flourishing state of human affairs, and the perfection of human nature: these are its delightful prospects, and this the charm of beauty which attracts it.

"Still ardent in this pursuit (such is its love of order and perfection) it rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection; wishing the best, and hoping still to find a just and wise administration.

"And since all hope of this were vain and idle if no universal mind presided; since without such a supreme intelligence and providential care the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities; 'tis here the generous mind labours to discover the healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things and the universal order happily sustained.

"This, Palemon, is the labour of your soul, and this its

Melancholy when, unsuccessfully pursuing the supreme beauty, it meets with darkening clouds which intercept its sight..." ' 19

Shaftesbury admits, through Philocles, that this sort of transport is a manifestation of Enthusiasm, previously regarded with suspicion and apprehension. He makes clear that the philosophical enthusiasm inspired by Theocles in his friends, and expressed here by Philocles, is nothing like the 'vulgar' kind, of modern 'zealots' who guard religion. He gives a character sketch of Theocles, the enthusiast without ill-humour, and the emulation by Philocles is of course, a prescription of emulation for the Shaftesburean.

The setting for the preliminary Palemon/Philocles exchange is the Park. A description is hinted of the two gentlemen enjoying a walk and coach ride, among others of similar social standing. Although Shaftesbury does not appear to make much of this, it complements his suggestions elsewhere of philosophy being appropriate for the man of business, the active man in the social world of the town. Philocles, we may note, returned to the town after his visit to Theocles, and it is for Palemon's benefit that the exchanges are being set down, Palemon the man of the town and society. This means an important qualification to the idea of 'country retirement' that may otherwise dominate the setting of the Moralists. It suggests that the philosophy might best be matured and instilled, assimilated and understood, in a country setting but that it was anticipated that its application

19. Ibid., ii, 21. The last paragraph cited here is of particular interest in that Shaftesbury couches this pursuit of a soul motivated by this wide ranging 'love', in terms reminiscent of the sick soul and his own search for an 'answer' in his cathartic period in Holland.

would then turn to the town.

While the philosophy of love is an important central theme in Shaftesbury's positive contribution,²⁰ in the Moralists he presents also a series of attitudes, which were rather resonant to the age, than developed philosophical positions. Hence, the ease with which he can cite the Mantuan Muse, and Horace. There is of course, a norm-setting process under way at the same time, Shaftesbury helps to form manners as well as to use them for his ends.

Theocles and Philocles begin their exchange with a discussion of the latter's philosophical position. Shaftesbury manages another sally against hedonism characterised by the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Philocles sees that such transient pleasures should not be called 'good' but finds it difficult to move from this short-sighted hedonism onto a sounder philosophical footing. His dissatisfaction is emotional as well as intellectual, an important point from our viewpoint. Theocles suggest something along the line of benevolence and altruism, but his friends remain unconvinced. Shaftesbury may be exploring situations and attitudes of mind, rather than a philosophically based viewpoint. In a sceptical frame of mind Philocles retires with Theocles, to the plain meal and few friends, that serve for dinner and company at the latter's home.

The model here is Epicurean but not indulgent. Shaftesbury remarks that the dinner is not to proceed to a debauch, that there are no pledgings or toasts. This background is used to point the

20. Greans's Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, particularly centralises the role of love in Shaftesburean philosophy.

way to the distinction in practical terms between the philosophy of pleasure and the philosophy of virtue that Shaftesbury is recommending.²¹ It may be seen as analogous to the less rigidly stoical attitudes found in Horace, but also as a further example of Shaftesbury's prescribing manners outside of the essentially ethical. Just as following Nature and the argument from design are pointed by the setting of the dialogue in a rural context, so the didactic purpose of the small group of friends, and their manners at the dinner table, provides a background from which the inference concerning the possibilities for philosophy in society, could be drawn.

Theocles puts forward an argument for moderation and control, in the form of a consideration from temperance. He observes that the laws secure lands and revenues. A comparable security in the moral sphere comes from the freedom gained by self-control, which overcomes the subjection of the self to every passing inclination. The weight of such an appeal lay in the analogy with the idea of law affording protection to property. Shaftesbury made this point by appealing to the approved need for society to be free from arbitrariness, from above in the form of absolutism, and from below in the form of social and political disorder. There would also have been some reciprocal reinforcement of the arguments.

Philocles sets up a discussion by questioning the correspondence supposed to exist between highly praised virtue and men's practice. One of the guests at the dinner decides to put Philocles in his place.

21. Characteristics ii, 43.

He is described by Shaftesbury, attacking Philocle's suggestion of debased virtue, as an 'formal sort of gentleman, somewhat advanced in years'. However, on this occasion 'formal' is not equated with religious zeal, Shaftesbury merely using the opportunity afforded to point to the existence of religious zealots who would build the ascendancy of religion on the debasement of virtue.

Theocles turns to a justification of the approach adopted in the Inquiry, which has been censured for adopting a new stance towards those whose principles of religion are less secure. Atheists are separated into two categories, those who deny and those who merely doubt. The latter alone are to be treated with respect and reasoned argument. As for the others:

'He who denies is daringly presumptuous, and sets up an opinion against the interest of mankind and being of society'. 22

Shaftesbury argues that the former are the proper object of the philosopher's attention, and the latter, the proper object of the magistrate's work. Although Shaftesbury might envisage that there were few anti-social atheists, the concession to the magistrate illustrates the limited nature of his plea for more rational and less persecuting, haranguing and vilifying, a discussion of religious opinions. Moreover, it may be added that such a concession was unlikely to appease the zealots, who we have described as conceiving their Church as being under attack.

The doubters, he admits may be subjected to the same treatment as the deniers, but this is hardly very Christian, and he touches

upon the size of the problem:

'Neither ought they perhaps in prudence to be treated with so little regard whose number, however small, is thought to be increasing, and this, too, among the people of no despicable rank.' 23

In this way, Theocles allows the author of the Inquiry to have been justified in his attempt to seek a different approach in the defence of religion and morals.

The defence of Shaftesbury by Theocles, of the author of the Inquiry by the principal spokesman of the Moralists, may be seen as strategic. It affords Shaftesbury, the opportunity of reaffirming his intentions in respect of the earlier version of the Inquiry,²⁴ and of setting what appears as an assertion of the autonomy of morals (the Inquiry) into a context of the times, into a discussion of attitudes towards religion and discussion. In the context of the Characteristics it represents the iteration of arguments in the Inquiry, as Shaftesbury sustains his attack on prevailing ways of treating differences of religious opinion. Theocles depicts the author of the Inquiry as attempting to steer a middle course between those who elevate the mysterious in religion and lead on to enthusiasm and extravagance, and those who appeal to a rational consideration of future rewards and punishments and who risk devaluing religion by making it devoid of all affection, or warmth.

The attention afforded the Inquiry is primarily given to Theocles' justification. It is not subjected to counter argument or a different representation by any of the other characters. It cannot be

23. Ibid., ii, 51.

24. It will be recalled that the Moralists appeared independently in 1709 before its joint appearance with the revised Inquiry in 1711

said that Shaftesbury is drawing on other arguments to prove the strength of the Inquiry, but rather that he advances once more the same views, this time with their relevance to contemporaries made more clear.

The scene is still the convivial gathering at Theocles' dinner table, but after the apology for the Inquiry this is changed. Shaftesbury has the party take the evening air, in the fields outside.

'Accordingly we took our evening walk in the fields, from whence the laborious hinds were now retiring. We fell naturally into the praises of a country life, and discoursed awhile of husbandry and the nature of the soil.' 25

Here the supportive sketch by Shaftesbury, suggests a world where men observed agricultural workers returning home from work, as they themselves set out upon an after dinner stroll, with equanimity; that this was not something upon which one would comment. Shaftesbury's attempt at a kind of prose pastoral, serves, in fact, to heighten our awareness that Theocles' and his guests have talked and eaten, and are now walking, whilst others have worked. However, whilst observing that Shaftesbury does not find this apparent disjunction a source of unease, it is enough to suggest a less egalitarian society (or a society less conscious of egalitarianism). Another contrast, which points to the social character of the times, is that Philocles and the others are evidently at home among the countryside. They do not represent urban man on a visit, but are knowledgeable of the ways of the country.

Theocles enters the discussion by observing Philocles is unable

to extend his knowledge from particulars of nature to more general observations. He then begins to set out the argument ~~for~~ the design of Nature, for order in the world and universe, and for the exceptional character of the defective. Our failure to appreciate this order in nature, this evidence of design derives from our referring the evidence to our own limited capacities. Shaftesbury cites Locke to support his claim that the evidence of our senses supports the view that the systems that we see are but parts of greater systems.²⁶ Shaftesbury likens the whole to a 'vast machine' or a ship in which a man may have no inkling of the parts performed elsewhere.²⁷

'All we can see either of the heavens or earth demonstrates order and perfection; so as to afford the noblest subjects of contemplation to minds, like yours, enriched with science and learning. All is delightful, amiable, rejoicing, except with relation to man only, and his circumstances, which seem unequal. Here the calamity and ill arises, and hence the ruin of this goodly frame. All perishes on this account; and the whole order of the universe, elsewhere so firm, entire, and immovable, is here overthrown and lost by this one view, in which we refer all things to ourselves, submitting the interest of the whole to the good and interest of so small a part.'²⁸

Shaftesbury allows that man is different from the animals, in very little, in wisdom and merit perhaps, which few conform to, and the description of the order of the universe revealed through the evidence presented to the senses, shifts onto an injunction to a few to look after their moral welfare. The logistics of the argument

26. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding IV, Ch4. Sections 11 and 13. Significantly Locke was to add that judgment may reach further, but that it was not knowledge.

27. Characteristics, ii, 62-67.

28. Ibid., ii, 67.

here are suspect, if a philosophical view, in the academic sense, is adopted. However, his maintaining his close relationship with his reader is easily demonstrated at this juncture:

' "Thus we inquire concerning what is good and suitable to our appetites; but what appetites are good and suitable to us is no part of our examination. We inquire what is according to interest, policy, fashion, vogue; but it seems wholly strange and out of the way to inquire what is according to Nature. The balance of Europe, of trade, of power, is strictly sought after; while few have heard of the balance of their passions, or thought of holding these scales even." 29

Thus, although he is sometimes prepared to allow himself to indulge a weak argument in philosophical terms, Shaftesbury seeks to press the importance of his message by reaching across to the common stock and subject matter of contemporaries views. Concurrently, Shaftesbury writes indicatively of the limits of the audience, of those with the good fortune to be born with a good disposition, to remain uncorrupted, to have been given a liberal education, whose assets such as these must be further improved. This inter-weaving presents two of the features that we are seeking to highlight, the Shaftesburean tendency towards counter culture, to separate from the mainstream of mankind; and also his attempt to socialise philosophy by making it acceptable, non-esoteric, non-technical. And of course, there is an element of paradox involved here, for socialisation does not always entail popularisation.

29. Ibid., ii, 68-69. Interestingly, Philocles' reply to Theocles here (pp 69-70) touches the vexed question of the relation of thought to matter, which had first occasioned Shaftesbury's engaging in philosophical discussion by letter with John Locke. As was the case then, Shaftesbury is unable to come to any satisfactory solution as to the nature of the relationship.

Part of the reply of Philocles to the argument from design advanced by Theocles, is to suggest that although the evidence for order is to be found in this world, it is still possible that this world is the exception among the multitude of planets. A further strand is developed as Philocles questions the limitations placed upon man, even in comparison with the animals, by this Nature, (which has been personified as a female). The argument, however, is aborted, at the outset, and Theocles maintains his position with ease. Philocles is prepared to accept limitations upon man's powers, because he would not have him 'lord of all', and Theocles then argues that accepting this, the distribution of those powers as they are is of the best. Philocles interprets:

'I understand you, said I, Theocles (interrupting him): the brain certainly is a great starver where it abounds, and the thinking people of the world, the philosophers and virtuous especially, must be contented, I find, with a moderate share of bodily advantages for the sake of what they call parts and capacity in another sense. The parts it seems, of one kind agree ill in their economy with the parts of the other. But to make this even on both sides, let us turn the tables, and the case, I suppose, will stand the same with the Milos of the age, the men of bodily prowess and dexterity. For not to mention a vulgar sort, such as wrestlers, vaulters, racers, hunters: what shall we say of our fine bred gentlemen, our riders, fencers, dancers, tennis-players, and such like? 'Tis the body surely is the starver here; and if the brain were such a terrible devourer in the other way, the body and bodily parts seem to have their reprisals in this rank of men.' 30

At which point Theocles, observing the reasonableness of his opponent in doing half his task for him, praises Philocles' philosophical manner, contrasting this to that prevalent among contemporaries and particularly 'bigot-sceptics'. This taken together with the

rejection of the philosophical question of the relationship of thought and matter as fit only for dogmatist to attempt to resolve, suggests that Shaftesbury was building up an alternative philosophical character, whose choice of subjects for debate, and manner of arguing, would be different from the criteria that he saw as being prevalent at this time.

Theocles then proceeds to defend the distributive justice of Nature, by which each animal or thing is allocated sufficient endowments to enable it to fulfil its function. The argument then turns to a discussion of a State of Nature.³¹

The State of Nature was, of course, an ideologically-loaded concept. It had significance in political dispute from its being postulated by Hobbes and Locke, as the pre-political state of man. Shaftesbury attempted to nullify the significance attached to a state of nature concept. The formal gentleman is introduced once again to point out that Philocles is little better than a Hobbist, postulating the natural unso iableness of man. Philocles shifts from a pre-social Lockean state (where a state of war does not always prevail) to a Hobbesian state of nature as a state of war equation.

Not abandoning his pursuit of better philosophical conduct, Theocles suggests that his companion Philocles is not to have views attributed to him, as the example of the formal gentleman had served to show, but is to be questioned. Theocles advances this conclusion

31. Note. Shaftesbury's unwillingness to adopt 'evolutionary' views as inimical to his idea of designing Nature.ii, 80-81.

after he has undermined the notion of a state of nature:

'...since the learned have such a fancy for this notion, and love to talk of this imaginary state of Nature, I think 'tis even charity to speak as ill of it as we possibly can. Let it be a state of war, rapine and injustice. Since 'tis unsocial, let it be even as uncomfortable and as frightful as 'tis possible. To speak well of it is to render it inviting and tempt men to turn hermits. Let it, at least, be looked on as many degrees worse than the worst government in being. The greater dread we have of anarchy, the better countrymen we shall prove, and value more the laws and constitution under which we live, and by which we are protected from the outrageous violences of such an unnatural state. In this I agree heartily with those transformers of human nature who, considering it abstractedly (sic) and apart from government or society represent it under monstrous visages of dragons, leviathans, and I know not what devouring creatures.' 52

The implication of the eradication of the state of nature as a useful counter in the game of political argument does not necessarily mean that Shaftesbury was deserting the Whigs. The evidence of his letters suggests the contrary, and too much should not be read into the significance of this particular point in its philosophical context. However, it does weaken the case for the Characteristics being seen as a disguised political work (as opposed to one that was occasionally and incidentally political); it strengthens the suggestion that Shaftesbury was endorsing some kind of counter culture, with a myth for the rest of society; and it suggests, but no more, that Shaftesbury was moving away from Commonwealth principles with which he had, in the 1690s, a brief and uncertain degree of involvement. Arguments such as the Revolution of 1688 having brought about a return to the state of Nature, were not going to carry much weight twenty years later, and Shaftesbury was prepared to abandon such a concept while retaining Whig principles. The significance of the

subject, is however, attested by the treatment which Shaftesbury affords.

There then appears a discussion of the supernatural, which reflects contemporary interest and perhaps Shaftesbury's also in miracles, eccentric acts of nature, and such like. Shaftesbury depicts the outlines of this discussion as it had been led by the two guests; it was another sort of philosophy, and the narrator apologises for passing over it with haste. There was

'...much said, and with great learning, on the nature of spirits and apparitions, of which the most astonishing accounts were the most ravishing with our friends, who endeavoured to exceed one another in this admirable way, and performed to a miracle in raising one another's amazement.' 33

Although admitting the genuine religious concern of the two guests which underlay their attempts to substantiate these miraculous events, Philocles says that he would rather hear of the natural inhabitants of Theocles' world than the unnatural inhabitants of churchyards.

Whereas the discussion of miracles and the supernatural involves Philocles and the two guests, the next discussion involves only Theocles and Philocles. The former represents the more usual 'philosophical discussion', with entrenched views being put forward. The latter discussion can be seen to represent Shaftesbury's alternative for the select few. Regarding Shaftesbury as speaking through Theocles alone, would tend to make the discussion of miracles (in which Theocles does not participate) an unnecessary digression, but if we regard the presence of Philocles as also representing Shaftesburean views, this difficulty is to a large degree removed. The

presence of the urbane and sceptical Philocles who is not so much in disagreement with Theocles, but rather falls short of that character's philosophical comprehension, suggests that by the device of having two characters Shaftesbury was able to establish a broader appeal, outside of the particular opinions of Theocles. The identification of the gentleman of taste with Philocles rather than Theocles in the first instance is what might be anticipated. Theocles becomes the representative of a more select group. The point is perhaps emphasised by Shaftesbury's having the discussion between the two principals take place way from the house, and in the absence of the two guests.

Theocles begins his hymn to Nature, his philosophical rhapsody to the creation and the creator. This represents the transformation of the rational man into the enthusiast, and is one of the most frequently cited of all Shaftesbury's writings, although after the apostrophe, Theocles returns to philosophical discussion in a more familiar manner.³⁴ It may be observed that even within the eulogy of Nature, Theocles has time to observe, blissful mansions, and delightful prospects, phrases which would act as recognition stimuli to the country gentleman.

Philocles has warned Palemon that this last part of his narrative is to be more philosophical than had been the case hitherto, and so it proves. Shaftesbury passes rapidly from matters of sense

³⁴. Characteristics, ii, 98-99. The technical problems here, caused by Shaftesbury's trying to depict an attitude and at the same time to present it in a form capable of criticism by reason, were obviously considerable and possibly insuperable.

impression onto distinctions between true and false identity. The true nature of a tree is investigated and by virtue of a sympathising of parts, '... our tree is a real tree, lives, flourishes, and is still one and the same even when by vegetation and change of substance not one particle of it remains the same...'. Then Shaftesbury attends to the problem of how Theocles and Philocles may appear the same persons in spite of physical and attitudinal changes. Shaftesbury appeals to common sense, to the evidence of the individual's senses and reason, rejecting through this, more refined academic speculation. Almost typically, Shaftesbury tells us what is sufficient that we know:

'And of this mind 'tis enough to say "that it is something which acts upon a body, and has something passive under it and subject to it; that it has not only body or mere matter for its subject, but in some respect even itself too, and what proceeds from it; that it superintends and manages its own imagination, appearances, fancies, correcting working and modelling these as it finds good, and adorning and accomplishing the best it can this composite order of body and understanding." Such as mind and governing part I know there is somewhere in the world. Let Pyrrho, by the help of such another, contradict me if he please. We have our several understandings and thoughts however we came by them. Each understand ~~and~~ thinks the best he can for his own purpose: he for himself, I for another self.' 35

In the last analysis this is rejecting the problem and the problem is rejected in this way because it is obstructing the presentation of something more important, the Shaftesburean philosophy.

Philocles is not entirely satisfied with the account of each identity, each particular nature working for its own good, which Theocles subsequently offers but his uncertainties are removed by

'demonstration'. Theocles argues for the inadequate and limited perception of man, that what appears to be ill may not in fact, be ill; that all things which appear to be ill may not be ill except in appearance alone; and that if all may be good, then all is good. This is supported by an account of the limitations of man's knowledge. Man does not know the nature of matter, nor should he seek to try to understand the principles of space. These are depicted as vain endeavours. Shaftesbury works upon a principle of there being sufficient knowledge upon which to base a working ethical practice, the rest being 'abstruse philosophy' which is unnecessary.

As the part played by Philocles diminishes from that of critic to that of disciple, Theocles is able to elaborate the argument for the evidence of a universal mind or principle immanent or exterior to the world/universe. Shaftesbury is not always consistent here which perhaps reflects his variety of sources, Stoic and Platonic, as well as his extended use of figurative speech.³⁶

Shaftesbury views have been subjected to detailed attention, and it is not necessary to rehearse here any more than the outline of the Shaftesbury alternative. It represents only a part of a broader strategic enterprise which has been designated with the name of the socialisation of philosophy. Indeed Shaftesbury's own views as expressed by Theocles may themselves be seen as a sufficient but not

36. Stoic elements may be traced in the reference to 'the invisible ethereal substance, penetrating both liquid and solid bodies,... diffused throughout the universe' (Characteristics ii, 117) and the 'periodical conflagration' (Ibid, 118); the Platonic elements are traced by several authorities, vide E. Cassirer The Platonic Renaissance in England (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953) and B. McBurrows, Shaftesbury and Cosmic Toryism, unpublished PhD thesis (Oklahoma, 1973).

essential part of a counter culture. The social restructuring, the change in attitudes, which permitted the existence of an 'alternative' to mainstream social groups, did not require that all those who dissented from prevalent intellectual paradigms, ecclesiastical or Hobbesian, had to become Shaftesbureans.

It is from his conception of the beauty of the whole, of the ordered and just design of Nature, that Shaftesbury derives his aesthetic views, which later became increasingly important as a means of 'showing' moral truths. In terms of our whole, we can look to the Inquiry as suggestive of a possible socio-political elite of virtuous men. This part of the Moralists is then to be seen as depicting, by example, the sensibility of those men who were separated from the 'unthinking world'. At the moment of his transformation into an enthusiast, Philocles admits:

'I must admit...I have hitherto been one of those vulgar who could never relish the shades, the rustic or the dissonances you talk of. I have never dreamt of such masterpieces in Nature. 'Twas my way to censure freely on the first viewLike the rest of the unthinking world, I took for granted that what I liked was beautiful, and what I rejoiced in was my good,' 37

When Philocles, approving what his guide has said, resolves to improve himself on the basis of his good parts, the way is open for a discussion of innateness. Theocles affirms that instinct at least is innate but cuts short any philosophical inquiry as fit only for virtuosos, anatomists, school divines.

The intention in the reform of Philocles' taste is that he should be enabled to rule and regulate his life in accordance with the dict-

ates of his reason. Shaftesbury again points to the advantages of the calm ordered life in contrast to the life of the man whose actions are determined for him. Shaftesbury sketches character-types, the hero, the man of wealth, the man of wit, the man of caution, the debauched man, and the man who must needs be popular, to serve as a contrast to the constancy, security, equanimity, and tranquillity of the man of reason, the model at which Philocles is to aim.

Towards the end of the dialogue Shaftesbury faces the problem of bringing back his convert into society. The place of philosophers in contemporary society is seen to be low. Philocles argues that the philosopher is seen as akin to the idiot. Theocles counters with the argument that the ends of man are served by the exercise of reason. The only proper question is who is to reason best. The essential aspect of the practice of philosophy is brought out:

'Tell me, therefore, have you fitly cultivated that reason of yours, polished it, bestowed the necessary pains on it, and exercised it on this subject? Or is it like to determine full as well when unexercised as when thoroughly exercised or ever so expert? Consider, pray, in mathematics whose is the better reason of the two, and fitter to be relied on? The practiser's, or his who is unpractised? Whose in the way of war, of policy, of civil affairs? Whose in merchandise law, physic? And in morality and life, I ask still whose? May he not, perhaps, be allowed the best judge of living who studies life and endeavours to form it by some rule? Or is he indeed to be esteemed most knowing in the matter who slightly examines it, and who accidentally and unknowingly philosophises?

Thus, ... is philosophy established. For every one, of necessity, must reason concerning his own happiness, "what his good is and what his ill". The only question is "who reasons best?".' 38

CHAPTER TEN.RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

The purpose in the preceding chapters has been to depict the activity in which the third Earl of Shaftesbury was engaged and which has been termed the socialisation of philosophy. The work of Shaftesbury has been examined to illustrate how far this activity can be seen as unifying his work. Preceding this examination there was a discussion of why and how Shaftesbury came to be interested in communicating his views on philosophy, its nature and content, to his contemporaries. The interpretation there, suggested that Shaftesbury was unhappy with prevalent explanatory belief-systems, whether philosophical, as with the Cambridge Platonists, the Sceptics, or the Hobbists, or primarily ideological, whether Whig, Tory, Church, Commonwealth. All these distinctions, and categorisations, distort to a greater or lesser extent the character of the thinking, of the ideas, of the times. Similarly, the transformation of Shaftesbury on a personal plane, through his attention to the Stoics, and in his capacity as a public figure as writer, through the emulation of Horace, are explanations of what was, at the time, in all probability a confused and apparently directionless intellectual journey in search of orientation. The earlier passages are necessary to substantiate the process that is seen in the Characteristics. Shaftesbury himself was aware of overall weakness and appended his Miscellaneous Reflections, to which we shall turn in the course of this recapitulation.

Firstly, we may note the accumulation of evidence that shows

through the consideration of Shaftesbury outside of the Characteristics and which has formed a part of our supporting structure. The initial overview of his life and works, pointed to the importance of breeding in the process of education, to the practical aspect of learning for an active life. It also highlighted the continued involvement of Shaftesbury in political and social life, noting his role as patron. This is of particular importance in appreciating the social aspect in the Characteristics which lie alongside the technical questions of philosophy. The importance of the implementation and communication of moral principles, which occurred to Shaftesbury at an early age, was remarked in this and the subsequent chapter. Lastly, the perspective on the life of the author, assisted in forming the correct measure of his involvement in matters of speculation, which were seen to take an important but by no means exclusive share of his attention.

This view was then set aside for a perspective which attended to environments, the philosophical and the socio-political, and to the author's activity in the years before he properly assume the mantle of the philosopher. The very discursive nature of the discussion gives the clue to the diversity of opinion in philosophy and ideology, diversity made all the more difficult to come to terms with, when the dimension of time and concomitant change, is added. From this, it is possible to trace the personal theme that runs through the Characteristics, the search for a sufficient and stable explanatory framework or model. This is what Shaftesbury had been seeking, and he repeatedly offered as the result of adopting philosophy, his inducement.

The practical aspect of philosophy, following on from the conception of education as training, akin to horse-riding or dancing, is to be seen in the extended visits to Holland, where Shaftesbury put together his Stoic derived philosophical notebooks, and also in the Soliloquy. Philosophy is seen as being an activity which was pursued, not merely the acquiring of a corpus of beliefs never to be applied.

The short discussion of Horace and his significance appears because of its being necessary to understand the transformation from Shaftesbury as private philosopher to Shaftesbury as public philosopher, because it also helps to explain how the severe edge of rigorous stoicism found in the notebooks came to be turned in the Characteristics. Critically, it may be thought that Shaftesbury weakened his philosophy by allowing a certain Epicurean rather than Stoic taste, and that Horace may have been responsible. On the other hand, Shaftesbury saw that it was necessary to make the philosophical way attractive, and that discipline and self-censure were unlikely to share the appeal that they had for him, with many of his prospective audience. After this manner, the treatises of the Characteristics were arrived at and severally discussed.

The Miscellaneous Reflections, fulfilled two purposes. Firstly, they made possible a further advance by Shaftesbury along the several lines of approach which he had taken in his attempts to weaken established strongholds or citadels of opinion. They fulfilled an iterative role, and a means for further elucidation of his views. Secondly, they provided the means by which Shaftesbury could attempt to unify the somewhat discrete treatises that had thus far appeared.

To a certain extent, these two purposes could prove incompatible

as the first focussed rather on additional penetration, and the second upon breadth, and interrelating ideas found in different sections. In electing to treat each with a separate Miscellany, Shaftesbury is ostensibly foregoing possible benefits from the latter in order to pursue the former purpose. There are thus five Miscellanies, corresponding to the Letter, the Essay, the Soliloquy, the Inquiry and the Moralists.

Shaftesbury's statement of intention is made after his opening remarks, ironical in character, upon the prevalence and popularity of the miscellaneous form of writing, which he himself is to use:

'I could go further perhaps, and demonstrate from the writings of many of our grave divines, the speeches of our senators, and other principal models of our national erudition "that the miscellaneous manner is at present in the highest esteem." But since my chief intention in the following sheets is to descant cursorily upon some late pieces of a British author, I will presume that what I have said already on this head is sufficient, and that it will not be judged improper or absurd in me, as I proceed, to take advantage of this miscellaneous taste which now evidently prevails. According to this method, whilst I serve as critic or interpreter to this new writer, I may the better correct his flegm, and give him more of the fashionable air and manner of the world, especially in what relates to the subject and manner of his two last pieces...'1

The first Miscellany then proceeds with an account of the modern world of letters and literary controversy as Shaftesbury perceived it. In this he can be seen to be aiming to reform an age, rather than to develop any philosophical point. He says that the author of the Letter declined to join in any controversy that arose subsequent to its appearance. The especial interest of Shaftesbury's presentation perhaps lies in his perception of the gain accruing to the bookseller, and retailers. He suggests that his bookseller has presented him with replies that he ought to answer, if he is to maintain his part.

The implication may well be that philosophers ought not to agree to humour the booksellers so readily, that the proper public for a philosopher was not to be found in the market place.

In the third and last chapter of this Miscellany, Shaftesbury discourses upon the nature of the letter as literary form. It ~~wought~~ to properly suggest the identity of the correspondent, he says, and contrasts the Letters of Seneca which fail in this respect. Shaftesbury insists that his Letter was really written as such. His censure of Seneca acts as denoting what styles authors are to avoid, and in this sense may be seen as prescriptive.² The wider implication of this would be Shaftesbury's being dissatisfied with existing literary practices.

However, what is clear is that the first Miscellany does not greatly advance any argument put forward in the Letter, and as such fails of correspondence. Shaftesbury's method appears to let him down, if it is narrowly construed. It is in the second Miscellany, that the Letter receives a fuller consideration.

It is here that we can see in operation Shaftesbury's second purposes referred to above, namely his intention to bind together the treatises. In a rather constricted fashion, he intimates that enthusiasm is the link between the Letter and the Essay.³

Shaftesbury also fulfils his first purpose of apostrophising this sentiment of enthusiasm, as if distinct from the particular

2. Ibid., ii, 170-1. It is interesting to note that as politician Seneca, is not censured, although his adequacy in philosophy is called into question. Seneca is in fact, called a guardian-angel.

3. Ibid., ii, 173.

texts he is supposedly commenting upon. He goes much further than hitherto, in either the Letter or the Essay, in his attempt to give an account of what he means by enthusiasm and what is its signification. Importantly, the possibility of an alternative view of the world, opposed to scepticism (as suspended judgement or doubt) and to the atomist 'chaos' of Lucretius (and Hobbes and Locke), which was carefully placed in a social setting in the Moralists is now suggested without the support of that setting.

Enthusiasm, he says, is natural, but apt to run astray. Yet Shaftesbury attends more to the undisciplined manifestations of enthusiasm than to the properly controlled variety. Again the implication being that there are certain forms which are best avoided.

Thus far, Shaftesbury had led his readers to expect that a further elaboration of his positive views would follow, but this is not so. Shaftesbury's problem can be seen as part of a strategic dilemma. He wished to assert the attractions of his doctrine of enthusiasm and virtue. He also wished to continue attacks upon religious enthusiasms and superstition, which he had presented in the Letter. He could deploy his arguments to support the positive aspect of his thinking that had been developed in the Inquiry and the Moralists; he could seek to unify the treatises by pointing to this supposed unifying and ever present theme of true enthusiasm; he could press ahead with variants or repetitions upon previous criticism: but to do all of these without the appearance of method would probably result in an uneven and fractured presentation. In the event, he seems to have elected to attempt such an approach, but with the emphasis upon the critical aspects, the further elaboration of the

arguments of the Letter and the Inquiry.⁴

One way in which he chose to support the earlier arguments was to develop his attack upon enthusiasm which had gone 'astray'. In the Letter, he had directed his argument to the French Prophets, the Roman Catholics and the sects, the latter two being for the most part, unidentified, but he had more forcefully focussed upon the nature of religious controversy and debate. In his discussion of 'panic' he has suggested the theoretical base for a social explanation of enthusiasm. Here, in his second Miscellany he began to trace the social history of enthusiasm in addition to its social psychology. His main source was Marsham's Chronicus Canon Aegyptiacus (1672) and classical authorities such as Herodotus whom he cites.

Shaftesbury's argument is best seen as being anti-clerical rather than irreligious. This helps to distinguish between his own positive professions of religious feeling, and his criticism of the ways in which this manifested itself in society. His stance then takes on the aspect of a anti-clerical Whiggery. On the other hand, it is improbable that contemporaries made such fine distinctions, but rather saw that the burden, the main part in terms of size, of Shaftesbury's arguments aligned against established religions. Shaftesbury points to establishment and organisation, to the power of the clergy to secure to themselves all the property and lands, and hence all the power in the state, and to the subsequent development of conflict;

4. In part, the increasing temperature of contemporary debate may have been the occasion for Shaftesbury's having elected to take the critical, rather than the constructive argument for emphasis. Rand, p 430, Shaftesbury to Somers, 30 March 1711.

the ideological implications of which would not be lost upon contemporaries, especially those who identified a strong Church with a strong State.

In awareness of the sensitivity of the issue Shaftesbury purports to have presented his argument as commentator as if they were distinct from those of the author upon whose works he is commenting. He maintains a dual identity between the author of the Miscellanies and the author of the five treatises. In the third Chapter of the second Miscellany, he represents views of others concerning enthusiasm. It seems clear that Shaftesbury felt that he was on sensitive ground, and summoned support for his views on enthusiasm - from Dr Ralph Cudworth, and Dr Henry More. With their help and his own clarification, Shaftesbury hopes to exculpate the author: on miracles, for example:

'He pretends not to frame any certain or positive opinion of his own, notwithstanding his best searches into antiquity and the nature of religious record and traditions, but on all occasions submits most willingly, and with full confidence and trust, to the opinions by law established. And if this be not sufficient to free him from the reproach of scepticism, he must for aught I see, be content to undergo it.' 5

If in his earlier treatise, and particularly the *Moralists*' character Philocles, Shaftesbury had justified scepticism or argued for its acceptance as better than zealotry, and bigotry, here too he reinforces this justification of scepticism. Scepticism is an acceptable 'half-way house' between the wrongly committed and the

5. Characteristics, ii, 200-1. My italics: Shaftesbury uses a key phrase of the times to protest his orthodoxy, although alleged conformity to the letter of the law, was unlikely to do anything towards the appeasement of divines, a fact Shaftesbury was well aware of.

more positive doctrines of Shaftesbury.

Part of his supporting framework here is made up of a sketchy history of religion and knowledge, in which the growth of religion is seen to represent the decline of learning. Some of this is derived from Bayle's Dictionary with which Shaftesbury had some acquaintance and which acted as a source book for the history of religion.⁶ Shaftesbury is giving a non-academic 'potted' history, and it may be that he had in mind possible proselytes, his 'illustrious youth', as well as his critics. The discussion moves easily into a consideration of religion and social control.

In the last chapter of the second Miscellany Shaftesbury finds that he has pursued his author into the Essay. He reaffirms his miscellany way of proceeding, and continues on quasi-formal lines to demonstrate the relation of good-humour and religion. His approach is justified in terms of what the taste of contemporaries demand. It is the formalism of another mode of instruction that has created this demand in reaction.

'We might now perhaps do best to lay aside the gravity of strict argument and resume the way of chat, which, through aversion to a contrary formal manner, is generally relished with more than ordinary satisfaction. For excess of physic, we know, has often made men hate the name of wholesome. And an abundance of forced instruction and solemn counsel may have made men full as averse to any thing delivered with an air of high wisdom and science, especially if it be so high as to be set above all human art of reasoning, and even above reason itself, in the account of its sublime dispensers.' 7

Shaftesbury's defence of good-humour may be seen as affording him the opportunity at one side to attack advocates of religion backed by legal

6. Characteristics, ii, 206.

7. Ibid., ii, 216-7.

rewards and punishments, and at the other side to recommend a different manner of proceeding. It is the manners, the mores that derive from the spirit of good humour. This is an essential part of the socialisation of philosophy, the depiction of how such a society might operate:

'(The better sort of men) will believe...to the full stretch of their reason... in order to be the more sociable, and conform the better with what their interest, in conjunction with their good humour, inclines them to receive as credible, and observe as their religious duty and devotional task.'

'On this account 'tis impossible that an honest and good-humoured man should be a schismatic or heretic,...'

'but the virtue of good-humour in religion is such that it can even reconcile persons to a belief in which they were never bred, or to which they had conceived a former prejudice.' 8

If we regard the grave dispositions as being that of a puritan in the century before Shaftesbury wrote, then the good-humoured man, would appear to be the archetypal religious man that he sought, and in this sense philosophy was concerned with character as much as articles of belief. Again the significance of what he asserts to his readers is brought home by the recurrent demonstration of concern with taste and fashion, and by the oblique descriptions of their society. At length, the method itself becomes unimportant and trivial, according to Shaftesbury, at one point.⁹

A further aspect of this treatment of the social background to religion which, though obvious, should not be overlooked is the apparently disproportionate amount of space that Shaftesbury devoted

8. Ibid., 11, 221.

9. Ibid., 11, 226.

to it. He was not being particularly original, but was rather derivative. Nor can it fairly be said that the argument is philosophical in the narrower sense of the word, although as history it might be comprehended under a wider definition of the term. However, Shaftesbury seemed to relish undermining the historical defences of Church and State, of established religions. His purpose is therefore to be seen as polemical. He had found a weakness in his opposition - as Bayle had before him - and he was exploiting this weakness to the detriment of the cause of Church and State. In the longer term this might have contributed to the development of what he would have regarded as a healthy scepticism, and possibly to the development of an alternative to Judai-Christianity, such as his own Nature informed religion. The latter course would not be 'established', but was rather predicated upon the judgment of the individual.

In his third Miscellany, Shaftesbury turns away from his concern with the spirit of religion, and enthusiasm, and social history. Initially, he is concerned to illustrate the author's method. This in all probability involved a degree of rationalisation, for the Characteristics evolved rather than was planned, and it was not until the Soliloquy, that Shaftesbury envisaged putting together his discrete studies. Here, we have been concerned to explain the logic of development in the man, the author, and the work. We have called the activity Shaftesbury's attempt to socialise philosophy. How then does this correspond to Shaftesbury's own account?

His view is that the author of the treatises has had his opinions formed from the beginning:

'Notwithstanding the high airs of scepticism which our author assumes in his first piece, I cannot, after all, but imagine that even there he proves himself a dogmatist, and shows plainly that he has his private opinion, belief, or faith, as strong as any devotee or religionist of them all. Though he affects perhaps to strike at other hypotheses and schemes, he has something of his own still in reserve, and holds a certain plan or system peculiar to himself, or such at least in which he has at present but few companions or followers.

'On this account I look upon his management to have been much after the rate of some ambitious architect, who being called perhaps to prop a roof, redress a leaning wall or add to some particular apartment, is not contented with this small specimen of his mastership; but pretending to demonstrate the unserviceableness and inconvenience of the old fabric, forms the design of a new building, and longs to show his skill in the principal part of architecture and mechanics.

' 'Tis certain that in matters of learning and philosophy the practice of pulling down is far pleasanter and affords more entertainment than that of building and setting up. Many have succeeded to a moracle in the first, who have miserably failed in the latter of these attempts. We may find a thousand engineers who can sap, undermine, and blow up with admirable dexterity, for one single one who can build a fort or lay the platform of a citadel. And though compassion in real war may take the ruinous practice less delightful, 'tis certain that in the literate warring-world, the springing of mines, the blowing up of towers, bastions, and ramparts of philosophy with systems, hypotheses, opinions, and doctrines into the air, is a spectacle of all other (sic) the most naturally rejoicing! 10

Shaftesbury does more than affect to strike at other schemes; he does strike at them. He has his own scheme but few followers. He has had his own opinion all the time. He conceives a literate warring world with military figures of speech, throughout which may be found philosophy. Much of this is confirmed in this study of Shaftesbury and the Characteristics, which has sought to broaden our comprehension by heightening awareness as to how and why, Shaftesbury wrote the Characteristics as well as considering what he wrote. Shaftesbury is

able to speak of his activity only figuratively, but here we have tried to show that by referring to the acclimatisation of different views to those existing and dominating at the time, to their introduction and exposition by Shaftesbury, and embracing this under the notion of the socialisation of philosophy, a more empirical and less subjective account is possible; an account that will enable a different perception of Shaftesbury and the magnitude of the enterprise upon which he was engaged.

Shaftesbury thought that his author might have done better to keep in mind the fact that criticism - 'his sapping method and unravelling humour' - is easier than construction. At this point, he tends to merge constructive thinking with method and formalism. This highlights a particular point which Shaftesbury wrestled with, but never finally solved. This was the question of form. His claims to be more formal, and dogmatic, more methodic, never realise their full value. Discounting the superficial aspect of his supposed aversion to 'formalism' as representing the manners of the schools, in the end Shaftesbury had something that could be shown, evoked, intuited, but not proved with his philosophy in its narrow and wider connotations. The philosophy of enthusiasm, the cosmology and appreciation of nature, was finally an attitude of mind; so too, was stoicism. An attitude of mind, in this sense, cannot be proved. In the wider context, breeding and politeness were also normative rather than objective. The appeal to breeding and politeness, to the emulation of men of wit and taste represented perhaps the point beyond which rational philosophy could not be carried; the dimension beyond the normal range of the judgment of the individual, who could not

after all exercise his reason in a preliminary sceptical fashion about everything.

Having expressed his author's purpose figuratively, and attempted further explanation in terms of the way in which he has presented his case, Shaftesbury turned once more to interpretative history. The progress of letters was his theme, the emergence of philosophy a particular within the theme. Leaving to one side ~~Shaftesbury's~~ temporary abandonment of his rationale, it may be observed that the conscious presentation of 'history' whether religious, or literary, suggests a greater awareness of the events of the past as an aid to understanding the present. Shaftesbury gives an early manifestation of a heightened awareness of the emergence of 'civilised society', of its restricted dimensions, and of the possibility of its being once more, lost; an awareness illustrated in Boswell's Life of Johnson, and amongst the Scottish philosophers, Hume Smith and Ferguson, in the latter half of the century. Civilisation was correlated with politeness as much as with organised human society, if not more so.¹¹

Once more Shaftesbury's purpose may be seen as attempting to provide an alternative historical framework for his contemporaries. A framework which went beyond national chronology, or Christian history. Shaftesbury is instructing, is socialising an alternative learning.

11. Characteristics ii, 241. 'Whatever flourished or was raised to any degree of correctness or real perfection in the kind (arts and sciences) was by means of Greece alone, and in the hand of that sole polite, most civilised, and accomplished nation.'

He is providing some of the means by which men can evaluate their place within the whole cosmic process, an alternative to the dominant Christian interpretations, be they Roman Catholic or Protestant, Shaftesbury is providing sufficient learning for the man of an active life. The ground which he covers in his review embraces the arts in Greece; public speeches since the Reformation in England; love of one's country; the arrival of civilisation in England; he makes recommendations and passes judgments. He also tells us what he thinks philosophy should be; as well as what it should not be:

'Whilst philosophy is taken (as in its prime sense it ought) for mastership in life and manners, 'tis like to make no ill figure in the world, whatever impertinencies may reign, or however extravagant the times may prove. But let us view philosophy, like mere ~~virtuosoship~~, in its usual career, and we shall find the ridicule rising full as strongly against the professors of the higher as the lower kind... Many things exterior and without ourselves, of no relation to our real interests or to those of society and mankind, are diligently investigated; Nature's remotest ~~cooperations~~, deepest mysteries and most difficult phenomena discussed and whimsically explained; hypotheses and fantastic systems erected, a universe anatomised, and by some notable scheme so solved and reduced as to appear an easy knack or secret to those who have the clue...

'It appears from hence that the defects of philosophy and those of ~~virtuosoship~~ are of the same nature. Nothing can be more dangerous than a wrong choice or misapplication in these affairs. But as ridiculous as these studies are rendered by their senseless managers, it appears, however, that each of them are, in their nature, essential to the character of a fine gentleman and man of sense.

'To philosophise, in a just signification, is but to carry good breeding a step higher. For the accomplishment of breeding is, to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in arts; and the sum of philosophy is, to learn what is just in society and beautiful in nature and the order of the world.

' 'Tis not wit merely, but a temper which must form the wellbred man. In the same manner, 'tis not a head merely, but a heart and resolution which must complete the real philosopher. Both characters aim at what is excellent, aspire to a just taste, and carry in view the model of what is beautiful and becoming. Accordingly, the respective conduct and distinct manners of each party are regulated; the one according to the perfectest ease and good entertainment of company, the other

according to the strictest interest of mankind and society; the one according to a man's rank and quality in his private station; the other according to his rank and dignity in Nature.' 12

It is rather easy to dismiss Shaftesbury for relating philosophy to breeding, and to imply a certain snobbishness which the critic is naturally without. This is to mistake Shaftesbury. He was trying to redefine the character of the philosopher, to distinguish his genuine interest from those that were accepted. His analogy with the virtuoso is perhaps unfortunate, as that tends to connote the inadequate virtuoso of the Aubrey-image or theatrical presentation. Shaftesbury in an antecedent passage shows an awareness of the stimulant to philosophising, the basic questions concerning 'where am I? and what?'. In this passage, Shaftesbury is trying to show the proper place for a philosopher is in society at large, not in the cell; that while the virtuoso and well-bred may find their end in life firmly centred upon the self; the philosopher must be a humanist at least. He points again to the need for the philosopher to maintain constancy of purpose, if he is not to appear clownish. By inference, to learn to be a philosopher is to learn a role; and as with training to be a musician, there are limits to the effectiveness of organised or institutionalised learning. Philosophy is here being socialised in the same way that soldiering, or the practise of medicine might have been set up as standards at which to aim, roles and capacities with which to identify. If being well-bred, will entail that one is polite and agreeable, then, says Shaftesbury, being a philosopher entails that, in addition, one will be wise and good.

It is because of the attempted close identification between what were seen as desirable social attributes, manners and morals (which may be seen as antithetical to the previous close relationship between religious belief and morals) that Shaftesbury can be seen as set upon a broader enterprise, that of socialising philosophy. He writes of his advancing philosophy upon the very foundations of what is polite and agreeable, of recommending it upon the same foot as manners. It might seem therefore that so long as the 'social mix' stayed much the same Shaftesbury's ~~idea~~ of a philosopher-gentleman would find a place in society.

An attempt to refine Shaftesbury's reformulation of philosophical activity might appear to lie in differentiating between the philosopher and philosophy. In this way it might seem possible to characterise the philosopher in terms of social position, income or status. This however would be somewhat unhistorical even were it possible. In fact, Shaftesbury's concern to separate philosophy from formalists and learned professors, to remove it from institutions, tends against such a definition of the philosopher's role. It is difficult to say much more than that the philosopher must be eligible for public life, and a gentleman or better in terms of social ~~class~~: to add that he should be a man of education and breeding is only to tint such a sketch.

As for philosophy, it might perhaps be characterised by the problems with which it had to deal. At this period, such a range of problems might include the origin of society; the origin of man's ~~ideas~~; the nature of man in ethical terms, whether selfish or social. Yet the division of philosophers into two kinds, those associated with the

Church, and those associating with the literary world (Bayle, Le Clerc and other critics) represented some division along different lines. Shaftesbury's refusal on occasions to be involved with the ^{ramifications} ~~ramifications~~ of certain positions - which he usually termed metaphysical speculation - makes difficult the task of characterising the philosophy of which he spoke in terms of problems. On the other hand on the nature of the origin of society, the 'state of nature' he was able to make contributions, albeit playing down their importance. The case was similar with ~~his~~ Inquiry where he considered the nature of moral obligation (why should we be virtuous?) and the relationship of virtue to religion. However, this does not by any means extend to the full our appreciation of the breadth of Shaftesbury's concept of philosophy, and excludes, for example, the important part he envisaged for self-examination, and the practice of philosophy.

To return to the Characteristics, and specifically the third Miscellany at this point is opportune. Although he has justified the need for practice by analogy with the well-bred man, Shaftesbury further establishes his case upon different grounds, those of taste.

'Now a taste or judgment, 'tis supposed, can hardly come ready formed with us into the world. Whatever principles or materials of this kind we may possibly bring with us, whatever good faculties, senses, or anticipating sensations and imaginations may be of Nature's growth, and arise properly of themselves, without our art, promotion or assistance, the general idea which is formed of all this management and the clear notion we attain of what is preferable and principal in all these subjects of choice and estimation will not, as I imagine, by any person be taken for innate. Use, practice, and culture, must precede the understanding and wit of such and advanced size and growth as this.' 13

Shaftesbury proceeds to elaborate upon the prevalence of occasions

for the exercise of such critical taste, in company, in the theatre, in the garden, at the table. He asserts that a little more taste in the matter of life itself would mend the manners and secure the happiness of those of his countrymen who come into the world with high advantage. Once more the statesman or political man is depicted corrupted by equipages, titles precedencies, staffs, ribbons for which the forfeit is inward merit, honour and character. Shaftesbury outlines some of the archetypal 'corruptions' of the time, the nearest he came to identifying any of his contemporaries. Although certain public figures might feel themselves to have been his target, Shaftesbury could equally point to others, and suggest that those whom the description fitted, might appropriate it if they so wished. Against such models, Shaftesbury appealed to the youth, as yet uncorrupted, or 'retrievable' and sought to form their taste upon a moral base.

Once more it may be remarked that Shaftesbury attends at length to the problems of morality and taste in contemporary society because of his concern with the principles and the practice of philosophy. The socialisation of philosophy involved not merely a theoretical argument, but also a practical demonstration of the relevance of the activity. This could best be illustrated by depicting some of the unregenerate character types of the times; **by** pointing to bad manners, Shaftesbury hoped to persuade his reader to attempt improvement.

Importantly, taste and judgment are a matter for the individual. The decision-making process ought to be the prerogative of the individual. In this sense Shaftesbury is an individualist. The individualism is prior to the promotion of a particular philosophy, and may be seen as part of his attack upon received opinions, the convent-

ional wisdom, the morality of fashion or the pulpit. There are, of course, parameters such as revealed religion, across which a man ought not to transgress; and this individual right to make judgment was unlikely to be granted to all men - not to the vulgar perhaps. However, in asserting the right even of some men to be free of the dictates of others or of society, Shaftesbury was promoting a liberty and a liberalism, albeit limited.

At the opening of his fourth Miscellany, designed to correspond to the Inquiry, Shaftesbury makes another sally at clarifying or rationalising the approach. He writes of the first three treatises being prefatory to the fourth and of the fifth being an apology for the fourth. The Letter, Essay and Soliloquy are prefatory, the Moralists an apology. The Inquiry thus appears central. In our presentation Shaftesbury has been seen as fighting an engagement which involved confrontation along several parts of the 'front'. In terms of socialising philosophy, of winning the engagement, or gaining round adherents, shifting the balance of forces or securing territory, the whole is important, the Characterisitics in its entirety. It may be that within the lines drawn by Shaftesbury the Inquiry was conceived to represent the major force among his armament; certainly it was more readily recognisable as 'philosophy' within the accepted patterns of the time, but it does not emerge as typically Shaftesburean because it was precisely by his ability to go outside the accepted pattern that his overall strategy gained the advantage that it did. In nearly all

contemporary criticism,¹⁴ there is something to the effect that Shaftesbury was fine writer but lacked method. He used unorthodox literary tactics. His formal and traditional method in the Inquiry is rather the exception than the rule, and for that reason has appeared to be subsumed in this presentation of Shaftesburean policy and strategy.

In this Miscellany Shaftesbury dismisses the Cartesian cogito ergo sum because the predicate is presupposed in the subject, and is rather contemptuous of the philosophers' problem with personal identity:

'To the force of this reasoning I confess I must so far submit as to declare that, for my own part, I take my being on trust.' 15

Shaftesbury does not deny that a ~~problem~~ exist, but simply shows that for him at least it is not an important problem. The consequences of this are that we must be careful of categorising Shaftesbury too readily as an indifferent philosopher, and look to the nature of the activity upon which he thought he was engaged. Shaftesbury's failings may lie in our own different conception of what a philosopher ought to be concerning himself with. Shaftesbury himself seems content with the notion of moralist, though again our conception tends to be

14. The critical reception of Shaftesbury is not well documented, but together with a bibliography remains a desideratum. The reception of the Letter, has been briefly considered above. Mandeville appears as initially uncertain then as critical; vide Bernard Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees ed. F.B. Kaye, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), but this was nearly ten years later (p. lxxii). There was a gap of ten years between the appearance of the last Shaftesbury revision 'the second edition' of 1713/4 and the next edition, and Shaftesbury may have been a 'sleeping' during this period. He himself thought that the absence of critical reception was attributable to deliberate policy on the part of party writers and critics in 1711. PRO 30/24/26/7.

15. Characteristics, ii, 276.

rather too narrow to embrace the whole of the activity.

'Meanwhile there is no impediment, hindrance or suspension of action on account of these wonderfully refined speculations. Argument and debate go on still. Conduct is settled. Rules and measure are given out and received. Nor do we scruple to act as resolutely upon the mere supposition that we are, as if we had effectually proved it a thousand times, to the full satisfaction of our metaphysical or Pyrrhonian antagonist.

'To me this appears as sufficient ground for a moralist. Nor do I ask more when I undertake to prove the reality of virtue and morals.' 16

He then proceeds to rework and examine some aspects of his moral philosophy as contained in the Inquiry, pointing to the benefits to be gained from a steady course or regimen. Moreover, he significantly remarks that it is those of an elevated station in life, who live in the highest sphere, who lose sight of happiness or good, and succumb to the temptations of popularity, parliament, and the Court.

He returns to the philosophical shadows or illusions. The identity problem which he has earlier dismissed is referred to:

'..."that it is in a manner necessary for one who would usefully philosophise, to have a knowledge in this part of philosophy, sufficient to satisfy him that there is no knowledge or wisdom to be learnt from it." For ~~off~~ this truth nothing besides experience and study will be fully able to convince him.

'When we are even past these empty regions and shadows of philosophy, 'twill still perhaps appear an uncomfortable kind of travelling through those other invisible ideal worlds, such as the study of morals, we see, engages us to visit. Men must acquire a very peculiar and strong habit of turning their eye inwards in order to explore the interior regions and recesses of the mind, the hollow caverns of deep thought, the private seats of fancy, and the wastes and wildernesses, as well as the more fruitful and

cultivated tracts of the obscure climate.

'But what can one do? Or how dispense with these darker disquisitions and moonlight voyages, when we have to deal with a sort of moon-blind wits, who though very acute and able in their kind, may be said to renounce daylight and extinguish in a manner the bright visible outside world, by allowing us to know nothing beside what we can prove by strict and formal demonstration?' 17

The formalists, it would seem, are encumbered with both the wrong method and the wrong problems. The contemporary philosophical establishment was confronting pseudo-problems.

He then supports his arguments for a natural order and hierarchy, with appeals to areas with which his gentleman reader would be more familiar. He writes of animal economy, 'sporty gentlemen', not without irony it is true, but in a way calculated to make an appeal to experience rather than academic rules. This reviewing of the argument of the Inquiry as to man's place in a natural order, his sociable nature, the origin of virtue, is presented in a way divorced from shadows and illusions, as self-sufficient philosophy, almost self evident to the reader.

The last Miscellany opens with a discussion of literature and inspiration whose point may be said to be directed at revealed religion and the allegations of divine inspiration of scripture.

'It belongs to mere enthusiasts and fanatics to plead the sufficiency of a reiterate translated text, derived to them through so many channels and subjected to so many variations, of which they are wholly ignorant.' 18

This literal interpretation is taken only by vulgar enthusiasts. The spirit of critical appreciation is now established according to Shaftes-

17. Characteristics, ii, 286.

18. Ibid., ii, 302.

bury, and will permit the supremacy of the reader over the written word:

'...to congratulate our English reader on the establishment of what is so advantageous to himself - I mean that mutual relation between him and ourselves, which naturally turns so much to his advantage and makes us to be in reality the subservient party. And in this respect 'tis to be hoped he will long enjoy his just superiority and privilege over his humble servants who compose and labour for his sake. The relation in all likelihood, must still continue and be improved. Our common religion and Christianity, founded on letters and Scripture, promises thus much. Nor is this hope likely to fail us whilst readers are really allowed the liberty to read - that is to say, to examine, construe, and remark with understanding. Learning and science must of necessity flourish, whilst the language of the wisest and most learned of nations is acknowledged to contain the principal and essential part of our holy revelation.' 19

Shaftesbury was for the most part being ironical. Contemporary opinion did not encourage the acquisition of learning so that each man could be equipped with sufficient knowledge to conduct scriptural exegesis from the Greek. Yet implicit here is Shaftesbury's ideal, of a broader-based community of men who would be equipped to conduct such researches into ancient learning, in which the expert opinion would be a guide rather than a dictate. The socialisation of philosophy has its wider setting in the emergence and brief flowering of the republic of letters:

'And criticism, examinations judgments, literate labours, and inquiries must still be in repute and practice, whilst ancient authors, so necessary to the support of the sacred volumes, are in request, and afford employment of such infinite extent to us moderns, of whatever degree, who are desirous to signalise ourselves by any achievement in letters, and be considered as the investigators of knowledge and politeness.'

19. Characteristics, ii, 306-7. Here is one aspect which illustrates that Shaftesbury was not merely trying to identify the new philosophy, the new spirit of learning, but was also trying to find a place for it in society. This is rather like setting a social context to a game, such as bridge, for example, and the social context sometimes looms larger than the game, and its tactics.

It may only have been a brief, even illusory flowering, for the dominance of authority and the Church in literature was perhaps replaced by that of the critics.

Shaftesbury then tries to depict a course and role for the writer. He argues that great statesmen, 'politicians and civil sages' are superior in merit, but that the writer may play a secondary part in the drama of his times. He refers to those whose fortunes exclude them from the higher scene, and those who have been forced 'by many impediments and obstructions' to retire, and this last is clearly a reference to himself. Classical examples that he cites include his favoured authors, Plato and Xenophon.²⁰ With slight difficulty he recalls that the author is supposed to be subordinate to the reader.

It is to the formation of proper taste and to the cultivation of the ability to make correct judgments, that he attends next. For the Stoic individual these were a matter of giving or withholding assent, for Shaftesbury's contemporary, in the social world, it was prevailing standards or 'criticism'. He discusses the theatre, poetry and literary style.

He then attempts self criticism but settles instead for a further consideration of contemporary literary manners, as a preliminary. Of the Moralists, he writes:

'It appears indeed, that high as our author in his critical capacity would pretend to carry the refined manner and accurate simplicity of the ancients, he dares not, in his own model

20. On Xenophon: '...an original system of works, the politest, wisest, unfullest, and (to those who can understand the divineness of a just simplicity) the most amiable and even the most elevating and exalting of all uninspired and merely human authors' Characteristics ii, 309.

and principal performance, attempt to unite his philosophy in one solid and uniform body, nor carry on his argument in one continued chain or thread.' 21

He employs the alleged distaste for method and pedantry as his rationale for his polite form, and dialogue method with narrative framework. His 'criticism' of the Moralists is in fact, composed of occasional sallies, such as that against religious dialogue writers, and of his justifying the natural qualities of the performance.

More helpful perhaps, is his division of men into a thinking and an unthinking part, which he presents in his concluding chapter:

'There is good reason to suppose that, however equably framed or near alike the race of mankind may appear in other respects, that they are not always equal thinkers or of a like ability in the management of this natural talent which we call thought. The race, on this account, may therefore justly be distinguished, as they often are, by the appellation of the thinking and the unthinking sort. The mere unthinking are such as have not yet arrived to that happy thought by which they should observe "how necessary" thinking is, and how fatal the want of it must prove to them," The thinking part of mankind, on the other side, having discovered the assiduity and industry requisite to right thinking, and being already commenced thinkers upon this foundation, are in the progress of the affair convinced of the necessity of thinking to good purpose and carrying the work through to a thorough issue. They know that if they refrain or stop once upon this road, they had done as well never to have set out. They are not so supine as to be withheld by mere laziness, when nothing lies in the way to interrupt the free course and progress of their thought.

'Some obstacles, 'tis true, may on occasion be pretended.' 22

For, it was with the obstacles that Shaftesbury had been much concerned, the struggle for freedom of thought, and the ascendancy of reason. This was as much a social objective as it was a philosophical objective.

21. Characteristics, ii, 334.

22. Characteristics, ii, 342.

Shaftesbury returns briefly to Hobbesian thinkers, whom he attacks in the guise of their being 'half-thinkers'. Their practice is 'cunning and low thought, sordid deliberations, perverse and crooked fancies, ill dispositions and false relishes of life and manners'. Thus limited capacity, as well as inability, is numbered among the restraints upon freedom to think. The last restraint is 'superstition bigotry, and vulgar enthusiasm.' Of all restraints, this last is most pernicious. Its dominion extends from morals to politics, and it has contrived to identify free-living with free-thinking:

'I can no more allow ~~that~~ to be free living, where unlimited passion and unexamined fancy govern, than I can allow that to be a free government where the mere people govern, and not the laws. For no people in civil state can possibly be free, when they are otherwise governed than by such laws as they themselves have constituted, or to which they have freely given consent. Now to be released from these, so as to govern themselves by each day's will or fancy, and to vary on every turn the rule and measure of government, without respect to any ancient constitutions or establishments, or to the stated and fixed rules of equity and justice, is as certain slavery as it is violence, distraction, and misery, such as in the issue must prove the establishment of an irremediable state of tyranny and absolute dominion.' 23

Thus in an important sense, it is not merely a philosophy which Shaftesbury puts forward, but a case for the right to think and for the individual to judge, a matter which has ramifications throughout society from the individual to the institutions.

In a series of concluding remarks to this survey of the nature of Shaftesbury's literary and philosophical enterprise, I should like to put forward some thoughts on perspectives on Shaftesbury that have been opened, and to try and clarify some of the principal elements of

of his strategy.

In terms of perspectives upon Shaftesbury, it may be said that Shaftesbury was not a moral philosopher, or literary critic who had wandered from his main purpose, but that the main purpose must be seen to have been broader than any readily categorisable academic or institutionalised discipline. As was perhaps the case with Horace, Shaftesbury stood at an important crossroads of intellectual and cultural interests in his time. It is not difficult to conceive of Shaftesbury as being engaged in a process of social 'picture-forming' from this point, of constructing pictures of real and possible worlds in arts, politics, social morality and behaviour. Clearly he did go some way down such roads and envisage possible futures, as his imagined cultural development of England reveals. This is to be found in his Letter Concerning Design.

In reality of course, Shaftesbury was surrounded by, and affected by developments taking place in the cultural world at this time. His reaction to these was sometimes immediate, and at others less so. The simmering debates upon the nature of the Church in society, and the associated political implications, he kept under a close surveillance. He read the Sermons of Atterbury, spokesman of the High Church Party, as late as 1709. He obviously noted the significance of the rejoinders to the Letter. Natural Philosophy, he was less interested in, although not without an interest in gardens, and cultivation, he was always inclined to emphasise the need for activity to be justified by practical results. A less well-documented interest was that of his ideas about warfare, but it is unlikely that he did not devote a considerable attention to the two problems of how to fight the war, and how to secure

the peace, that confronted his contemporaries. His attitude, from his position as surveyor of the contemporary scene, remained that odd combination, of ironical and satiric appreciation of the age's claim to be polite, whilst at the same time, having an appreciation of the opportunities that had been emerging since the recovery of civilisation by means of the Reformation, and the cultural impact of the Renaissance. Society, he might think, was on the path to improvement but had not quite progressed as far as it believed it had. Shaftesbury saw England as potentially great rather than actually at the zenith of civilisation and politeness. Most practical of all, perhaps, was his analysis of the power deriving to the Church through its establishment, in his and other societies. He argued after a neo-Harringtonian fashion, that power followed as a result of the possession of property, and that the ability of Churches and sects to acquire formed the basis of their political control. The implications, he left to be drawn by his readers.

Insofar as the socialisation of philosophy is concerned, this was predominantly an activity, an exercise or an enterprise. The intention here has been to show Shaftesbury in progress, as an operator advancing and skirmishing on a broken front, after the fashion of guerilla warfare. However, within this overall context, separate features may be remarked. One is the employment of different weapons, arguments, styles and literary forms. Satire and irony are used as appropriate means of establishing the intellectual and moral superiority of the author. The totality of which adds to the Shaftesburean enterprise depicted in the Characteristics. There is also the identification of the enemy, as a grosser, more cumbersome creature than the author. Shaftesbury attacks the outlying manifestations of the intellectual and

cultural 'opposition', by referring to the near barbaric taste, crudity of literary performance, and the hypocrisy of the religious in operating a carrot-and-stick policy towards their captive audience. His attack in depth comes in the Inquiry where he adopts what he calls the approach of the enemy, the methodic formal approach, and attempts to breakdown the relationship of religion and morality, hitherto seen as being necessary, and to establish a moral structure in which religion is a further security, but not a necessary support.

Authority is a key characteristic of Shaftesbury's 'enemy'. The authority of the Church or the authority of the coffee-house audience before the Bays or laureate. Shaftesbury objects not only to their wrong-headed ideas, but to their claims to act as founts of the conventional wisdom, to establish themselves as authorities. For the few Shaftesburean followers, nearly all conjectured at the time of writing, one suspects, they are their own authority. Shaftesbureans will function as individuals making their own judgment upon matters as a result of studying the correct critical models, usually, but not always Classical models, and as a result of conversations with their friends. Perhaps the closest to realisation of this counter-culture that occurred at this time, came with the group around the third Earl of Burlington in the next generation. Burlington's villa at Chiswick is the manifestation, the physical expression, of part of the Shaftesburean ideal.

Shaftesbury's ideal though, is never fully extended or painted at length, in the Characteristics for he returns after the Moralists to the critical undertaking and attacks differently, the same aspects of conventional wisdom, the Church, the pursuit of wealth and power, the dictates of established cultural authorities.

Between the ideal, the counter-culture, Shaftesbury's philosophy in a narrow sense, and the batteries of the enemy lie scepticism and the soliloquising practice of philosophy. The sceptical approach will free the individual from the dogmatisms of authority, and unquestioned obedience to the social expression of religion, the Church, as by law established. To translate from a sceptical position to a Shaftesburean position involved the assumption of some form of soliloquising practice of philosophy, a readiness too, on the part of the individual, to trust to the individual interpretation. Shaftesbury may well have seen that he would recruit more sceptics, than soliloquising individuals, and more introspective searchers than converts to the particular philosophy of the Moralists as put forward by Theocles, that Philocles was always likely to be a more common variety.. However, the battle would have been gained if the necessary shift in territory had been achieved and the upholders of conventional wisdom forced to retreat and diminish their claims. This would leave unoccupied an area in which the socialisation of philosophy, the extension of philosophy into areas of social intercourse and discourse from which as a critical attitude of mind it had previously been excluded, could come to fruition.

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